

Annex No. 3

The External Evaluation Report of an Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD): Bucharest University of Economic Studies

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I. Introduction¹

This external evaluation report of an Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD) at Bucharest University of Economic Studies was drafted in the period from 26. 7. 2021 – 30. 7. 2021 with institutional evaluation on-line (ZOOM) visit and till 27. 8. 2021 with preparing the written draft individual report as International expert for IOSUD evaluation.

The composition of the IOSUD expert Committee:

Prof. univ. dr. NAGY Ladislau

Prof. univ. dr. MOLDOVAN Nicoleta

Prof. univ. dr. MERKAČ SKOK Marjana – International expert, University of Novo mesto, Slovenia

CHIPER Alexandra Maria – PhD student expert

Prof. univ. dr. ROMAN Teodora

The ASE has a long and successful history, starting in 1913 and till now, but from 1967 under the present name. As it could be learned from the documents, prepared from ASE for this evaluation procedure and from interviews with many stakeholders, the ASE has been working in compliance with all national and institutional regulations regarding higher education and science in the country. ASE is legal, non-profit, public entity.

It operates in accordance with academic freedom and independently of external influences. As an advanced research and education university, since 2011 it is included in the category of universities of advanced research and education.

The documentation examined by the IOSUD expert Committee specifies all important milestones in the development of the universe, the results of evaluations and compliance with legislation. It also presents all internal acts that determine the processes and procedures of operation in the field of education and research and management ASE. Since 2005/006 the ASE organizes its educational process in compliance with the European study cycles: undergraduate, master and doctoral studies.

¹ Each time when applicable the information shall be presented genderwise



The ASE organizes doctoral studies in the fundamental study field of Social Sciences in the scientific areas Economic Sciences and Juridical Sciences. Doctoral areas are: Business Administration, Cybernetics and Statistics, Accounting, Economics, International Business and Economics, Finance, Economic Informatics, Management, Marketing and Law.

The programmes are managed by 11 doctoral schools organized by various faculties.

The Council for Doctoral University Studies – CSUD - coordinates the doctoral activity in ASE's doctoral schools (<http://doctorat.ase.ro>).

Doctoral studies offer full-time and part-time education, in Romanian or in a foreign language English, German and French. (Brosura institucionala. En, https://www.ase.ro/2013_files_en/despre_ase/istoric/BROSURA_institutionala_EN_2016.pdf)

In the last 5 years, the yearly admission for the state budget financed seats was 110 students enrolled into the first year, per year – the number of candidates was always significantly higher, but the enrolment is stable. For Romanian students, there were between 57 (in 2015/16) to 75 (in 2019/20) tuition fees seats and the trend is growing. The ASE also enrolls students from abroad, from Germany, Irak, Iran, Romania, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. There were 42 enrolments in the first year in 2015/16 and only 7 in 2019/20, the trend is declining. Beside that, the Romanian government is awarding 3-4 foreign students per year with scholarship.

II. Methods used

In the IOSUD expert Committee the members have been able to make the analysis of the internal evaluation report of the IOSUD and its Annexes, and also the evaluation reports for all doctoral study programmes and doctoral study schools, which met requirements for external evaluation. But unfortunately for international experts, many of supporting materials were not available in English language, the majority of annexes and other documents were only in Romanian. But the meetings with shareholders were translated and some of the missing information was provided during the on-site visit and explained additionally. We also received some translated materials (i.e. minutes for Ethic committee) after the visit.

We received and studied Internal evaluation reports for all doctoral programmes - the contents of which are repeated in a certain part - but thus provided insight into general rules, processes and procedures. But we missed a single evaluation report for ASE, as unfortunately ASE did not prepare a joint evaluation report, which is a shortcoming.

As the evaluation took place in a combined form, both on-line and on-site, some members of the committee had the opportunity to physically inspect the premises, infrastructure and documents. Which, however, was out of the question for an international expert and I cannot comment on that part of evaluation. However, this visit was made by some other members of the committee and they reported on that at the final meeting of the evaluators.

We have also made the analysis of documents, data and information available on the IOSUD/Doctoral Schools website in electronic format. On the ASE website the data and materials representing the school, programs and studies for students from abroad are in English, but are very deficient and incomparable in scope with the amount of data that Romanian-speaking candidates can obtain about ASE.



III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators²

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Criterion A.1. The administrative, managerial institutional structures and the financial resources

Standard A.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies (IOSUD) has implemented the effective functioning mechanisms provided for in the specific legislation on the organization of doctoral studies

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1. The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the IOSUD, respectively at the Doctoral Schools, as indicated by the acts and decisions referred to in the attached documentation and it complies with national regulations.

Based on the attached and accessible documents - although, unfortunately, the specific content of many documents, especially the annexes, is not known to me, as it is in Romanian - we were able to make sure the institution has all specific regulations in place, including (a) the internal regulations of the administrative structures - the institutional regulations for the organization and conduct of doctoral studies programs, the regulations of Doctoral Schools i.e.: ASE Charter, Organizational Chart of the Education and Research Structures and of the Technical Administrative Structure and the Regulation on organizational functioning; (b) the Methodology for conducting elections at the level of the Council of University Doctoral Studies (CSUD) - Election Methodologies (Annexes IOSUD35a, IOSUD35b, IOSUD-36), respectively at Doctoral Schools including elections by the students of their representatives in CSUD/Council of the Doctoral School (CSD) and the evidence of their conduct; c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies i.e.: Regulation for the organization and conduct of admission to doctoral studies, approved by the University's Senate before the start of the academic year and published on the University's website: https://senat.ase.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/2019/Hot.Senat%20nr.229%20din%2018.12.2019_Mod.reg.doctorat.pdf, <http://doctorat.ase.ro/admitere>; d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad - "Methodology to organize and to carry out the habilitation process" (Annex IOSUD-52) and the procedures of the National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas apply (<https://cnred.edu.ro/ro/studii-universitare>, Annex CSUD-53); e) functional management structures CSUD/Council of the Doctoral School with evidence of the regularity of meetings; f) the contract for doctoral studies – (Annex CSUD-59, also posted on-line); g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals about doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.

For the implementation of doctoral programs, all processes and procedures as well as the main criteria of success are determined at the ASE level. The Board of Trustees, the Faculty Boards, the Council for Doctoral Studies, and the Department Boards are the university structures. The ASE Senate is the highest decision and deliberation forum at academic level. The Board of Trustees assures the executive management and applies the decisions of the University's Senate, including: the Rector, the Vice-rectors who coordinate different fields of activity, the CSUD Director, the Deans, the General Administrative Director and the students' representative (<http://ca.ase.ro/>). The Rector provides the management and

² Each time when applicable the information shall be presented genderwise



executive leadership based on assumed managerial performance criteria and indicators. Deans, Vice-deans, and Department Heads ensure operational management within faculties. Regulations are elaborated in accordance with the legal regulations in place, are approved by the ASE Senate and are posted on the ASE website (<http://senat.ase.ro/hotarari>).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: The drafted acts are in accordance with national law and made public and accessible, which is a good thing. An extremely large number of highly motivated peers in various stakeholder groups took part in the interviews. Obviously, ASE is a reputable institution in the eyes of employees, students and the business environment. Problems in the field of state financing, obtaining international projects, reviving signed international agreements, etc. were also discussed openly. The school management has a clear picture of the situation and ambitious plans on how to remedy the shortcomings.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.2. *The doctoral school' Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.*

The regulation of the Doctoral School includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards for the aspects specified in art.17, par. 5 ofGD no. 681/2011, with its subsequent amendments and completions, i. e. it specifies the procedure on accepting new PhD supervisors, the manner in which the membership of the doctoral school may be withdrawn; the mechanisms by which decisions are taken regarding the opportunity, structure and content of the training programme based on advanced university studies; the procedures for changing the PhD supervisor of a certain doctoral student and the procedures for mediating conflicts; the conditions according to which the doctoral program may be interrupted; the ways of preventing fraud in scientific research, including plagiarism; ensuring access to research resources; the attendance obligations of doctoral students, with specific references to the training courses that doctoral students have to attend during the first year in the field of advanced research.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.2 is satisfactorily fulfilled.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator*A.1.1.3³. *Doctoral schools included in IOSUD are organized as disciplinary or interdisciplinary disciplines/thematic, according to Article 158, paragraph (7) of the Law of National Education No. 1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.*

Doctoral schools included in IOSUD are organized as disciplinary or interdisciplinary disciplines/thematic, according to Article 158, paragraph (7) of the Law of National Education No. 1/2011 with subsequent

³ The indicators marked with an asterisk (*) hold a special status, referring exclusively to the evaluation of doctoral schools, as per Article 12 from the annex No.1 of the Order of the minister of education No. 3651/12.04.2021 approving the Methodology for evaluating university doctoral studies and the system of criteria, standards and performance indicators used in the evaluation In case they are not fulfilled, the Agency extends a period of maximum 3 years to IOSUD to correct the respective deficiencies.



amendments and additions. They are organized within ASE Faculties: Accounting and Management Information Systems, Administration and Public Management, Agrifood and Environmental Economics, Bucharest Business School (BBS), Business Administration (in Foreign Languages), Business and Tourism, Economic Cybernetics, Statistics and Informatics, Finance, Insurance, Banking and Stock Exchange, International Business and Economics, Management, Marketing, Theoretical and Applied Economics.

The indicator is fulfilled

Standard A.1.2. The IOSUD has the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.1. The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.

ASE has an IT system that facilitates the collection, processing and analysis of the data and information relevant to the institutional quality assessment and assurance. The management of databases in the ASE is performed by DTIC (Annex IOSUD-19). The processes taking place in the ASE are computerised: the admission of students, the allocation of seats in the dormitory, the management of the scientific research activity, student record, school accounts, the completion of the diploma supplement, the granting of intercommunity scholarships and mobilities (Annex IOSUD-20).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ASE has effective an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.2. The existence and use of a software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.

The ASE has in 2015 implemented the operational procedure Antiplagiarism Verification, which defines the use of the antiplagiarism system in accordance with the technical specifications of the Sistemantiplagiat.roplatform. The procedure applies to all doctoral theses, books and articles supported/published in the ASE (Annex IOSUD-60). The results of the antiplagiarism verification are highlighted in the certificates of the similarity report (Annex SDAA-07). According to interviews with professors and management, all PhD students in the last 5 years were admitted for defense based on the results of the application of the antiplagiarism verification procedure.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ASE has effective an appropriate operational procedure Antiplagiarism Verification software program, used mostly for theses.

Recommendation: Antiplagiarism program should be introduced and became obligatory in the study process for all written assignments and also for all publications, made by students or teachers.



The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

Standard A.2.1. The IOSUD/doctoral schools have a modern research infrastructure to support the conduct of doctoral studies' specific activities.

Performance Indicator A.2.1.1. The IOSUD/the doctoral school(s) present proof of possessing or having rented adequate spaces for research activity specific to doctoral studies (laboratories, experimental fields, research stations etc.)

ASE has adequate spaces for research activities to doctoral studies, each doctoral school has at least one research center. The IOSUD holds a research infrastructure able to support the achievement of the specific activities of the doctoral studies. At the ASE level, the scientific research activity is coordinated by the Directorate of Research and Innovation Management which provides logistics and consultancy to stimulate the involvement in research programmes (Annexes IOSUD-62, IOSUD-63, (<https://cercetare.ase.ro/>)). The PhD programmes of the Doctoral Schools within the ASE include training programmes based on advanced studies and individual scientific research programmes and the participation of the PhD student in scientific projects established by the PhD supervisor. The research activity is being evaluated by the PhD supervisor and by the guidance commission. The scientific research carried out within the ASE has sufficient financial, logistical and human resources to achieve the proposed objectives. The educational spaces of the university: classrooms, amphitheatres, seminar rooms, laboratories, online platforms are properly equipped with computer technology, multimedia systems, the technical equipment corresponding to the current level of development of the scientific knowledge of learning, teaching and communication - (video projector, computer, projection screen, video conferencing equipment, TV studio, flipchart, wireless Internet access (Annexes IOSUD-19, IOSUD-20)). The software applications used within the ASE are licensed both for basic software (operating systems, antivirus programs), specialized software (SPSS, CIEL, EViews, SAS/R) and for application software (Microsoft Office suite, MS Sharepoint, MS SQL Server, other dedicated programs: Eviews, State, etc). Doctoral students from the Doctoral School of Business Administration have access to the infrastructure related to the material base of IOSUD –ASE, permanent access to the specific halls and laboratories. According to the interviews with research centre directors, they have significant results and include PhD students in several projects. All the equipment is available to PhD students. That was also confirmed at the meetings with PhD students.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Doctoral schools and research centres have very good conditions for research, regarding spaces, equipment and other infrastructure. The scientific research carried out within the ASE has sufficient financial, logistical and human resources to achieve the proposed objectives. Research centres managers are very capable, motivated and ambitious, doctoral students have many opportunities to join the research teams, but not all are encouraged enough to join.

Recommendation: find ways to support and motivate all doctoral students to join research projects led at ASE and to make use of all research facilities.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Performance Indicator A.2.1.2. *The IOSUD/doctoral school(s) has/have collaboration agreements with higher education institutions, research institutes, research networks for joint partnerships and have access for using various research infrastructures; the offer for research services is presented publicly using a dedicated platform.*

There were many evidence on collaboration with other relevant research institutions and several projects were presented at the interviews with shareholders. ASE has collaboration agreements, joint partnerships, joint publications, acces to research infrastructure in the partnerships – mostly data bases – research centres are collaborating often in the fields of statics, IT and other fielads. There are around 186 Erasmus + and arround 76 bilateral agreements (Annex IOSUD 72). The cooperation is dinamically and highly desirable by stakeholders. Most collaborations are based on personal contacts and past shared results. Announcements about participation and invitations to projects are published reguraly, especially at the ASE website, as well as doctoral schools and research centres websites. Students are informed about every research oportunity in the usual way.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ASE and her entities has several collaboration agreements with higher education institutions, research institutes, research networks for joint partnerships and have access for using various research infrastructures, mostly databases and joint publications; the offer for research services is presented publicly using a dedicated platform, which is appropriate.

Recommendation: There are so many agreements and there is a lot of room fro these agreements to be really applied into practical colaborations, which will not depend mostly on personal acquaintances.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.2.1.3. *The IOSUD/doctoral school(s) proves that it is/are concerned with permanent renewal of the research infrastructure to provide doctoral students access to up-dated research resources, by applying to various funding competitions and using own university resources for acquiring new research infrastructure.*

Acording to meetings with ASE and doctoral schools and research centres management, the ASE is applying to different funding competitions and also provides own financial support to provide renewal of research infrastructure. This was also confirmed by teachers and studnets.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Doctoral schools are very active in applying for projects and funding, but this is a long term strategy, that needs lot of internal support. The reportings were about some grants and fundings, that were a success in the past, which is very good experience.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resource

Standard A.3.1. At the level of each Doctoral School there are sufficient qualified staff to ensure a quality educational process.



Performance Indicator *A.3.1.1. *The share of Doctoral advisors coordinating simultaneously more than 8 doctoral students but not more than 12 during their doctoral studies⁴ does not exceed 20%.*

Within the ASE, the activity of mentoring PhD students is carried out by 211 teachers who are PhD supervisors. (Annex CSUD-01). Based on documentation and especially interviews with stakeholders, it is clear that there are some cases where supervisors have more than 8 – 12 PhD candidates. What this share is, cannot be estimated with reliability. For comparison, data from one of the schools - doctoral studies of Business Administration - PhD supervisors simultaneously coordinate, on average, at most 4 doctoral students during the normal period of the doctoral training programme and this is 0% (Annex SDAA-16, Annex SDAA-17 and interviews with stakeholders).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Judging by the documentation and the interviews with stakeholders, it is obvious that there are still a few teachers at ASE who are overburdened with mentoring, which is not good for students or for supervisors.

Recommendation: Short-term measures need to be taken to change the supervisors burden and to establish more mixed supervising teams.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.2. *At least 50% of all teaching/research staff involved in teaching/research activities related to training programs for advanced university studies or in individual research/art creation programs have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.*

Within the ASE, the activity of mentoring PhD students is carried out by 211 teachers who are PhD supervisors. Of these, 112 acquired the status of PhD supervisor before 2012, and 99 of them were affiliated with doctoral schools following the obtaining of the habilitation certificate during the period 2012-2020 (Annex CSUD-01). Of the 211 PhD supervisors, 11 are retired and coordinate co-supervised PhD students (Annex CSUD-64). In the case of the field of doctoral studies of Business Administration where 20 PhD supervisors affiliated with the Doctoral School of Business Administration work (Annex SDAA-05). During the period under evaluation (2015-2020), 21 PhD supervisors were affiliated with the SDAA, 1 of them requesting withdrawal from the doctoral school for having reached the legal retirement age (Annex SDAA-13). Of the PhD supervisors currently affiliated with the Doctoral School of Business Administration, 18 PhD supervisors, 90% respectively, meet the minimum CNATDCU standards, necessary and mandatory for obtaining the habilitation certificate in force at the time of the evaluation (Annex SDAA-14).

⁴ 3 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 159, paragraph (3), respectively 4 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 174, paragraph (3) of the Law of national education No.1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions, with additional extension periods approved as per Article 39, paragraph (3) of the Code of doctoral studies approved by the GD No. 681/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.



Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: The majority of teaching staff at ASE has a full-time employment contract at the institution, which is very good.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- *general description of the domain analysis.*

Criterion B.1. The number, quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission contest

Standard B.1.1. Candidates admitted to doctoral studies demonstrate academic, research and professional performance and are diversified as social representation and by gender.

Performance Indicator *B.1.1.1. *Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.*

ASE invites all qualified students to enroll, including those who have a master's degree from other universities. It emphasizes the principle of non-discrimination. Data from some doctoral school self-evaluation reports show that the proportion of candidates for enrollment coming from other universities is high. Since there are always far more candidates with vacancies than vacancies, it can be concluded that only the best candidate who demonstrates academic, research and professional performance and fully meets the prescribed conditions in the methodology and regulation to organize and carry out the admission.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Selection criteria are clear, consistent and include all elements prescribed by legislation.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.1.1.2. *The IOSUD/doctoral school(s) have a policy for stimulating enrollment of doctoral students coming from disadvantaged social environments, by allocating reserved positions in the admission procedure and/or granting special scholarships, as well as organising support programs to prevent drop-outs.*

The ASE does not discriminate candidates based on their personal circumstances, but also no effort is observed that ASE is encouraging and supporting doctoral students coming from disadvantaged social environments. Support programs to prevent drop-outs were not observed, but the supervisors emphasized intensive communication and providing support to their candidates in a variety of situations. PhD students can also attend any subject at the university free of charge, to improve their skills and knowledge.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Support programmes for preventing dropouts were not observed, which is a shortcoming. The



management was not sure about the main reasons for dropping out and about the measures taken, to prevent them, which is not good. Students reported about situations, when they needed information and focus and some more help and it was mostly connected with opportunities to make a mandatory publication.

Recommendations: Intensify support to students before dropout. Make analysis, what are the main reasons and prevent them.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

Standard B.2.1. The training program based on advanced university studies is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in science.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.1. *The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.*

Two disciplines are organized at the IOSUD level, by CSUD: Application of quantitative and qualitative methods in scientific research, Ethics and academic integrity. The other 2 disciplines are being organized within the Doctoral Schools. Of the 4 disciplines, one discipline is intended for the in-depth study of the methodology of scientific research and statistical processing of economic data (Annex CSUD-66; Annex CSUD-67).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: research methodology is one of two major courses in all doctoral schools at ASE, which is necessary and a good solution. They were not held in english for foreign students in the past. Some students coming from other fields would also need some more knowledge about research, besides this course.

Recommendations: Offer the research course also in english for all foreign students and find ways to support students, that struggle with basics and this course is not enough to provide them necessary research skills.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.2. *At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.*

Two disciplines are organized at the IOSUD level, by CSUD: Application of quantitative and qualitative methods in scientific research, Ethics and academic integrity. The professor of Ethics and academic integrity is also a member of Ethics commission.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ethics and academic integrity is one of two major courses in all doctoral schools at ASE, which is



necessary and a very good solution. It was not held in English for foreign students in the past. The subjects are also promoted within other study courses, which is very important to build awareness and prevention.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3. *The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses “the learning outcomes”, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities⁵.*

The ASE has all the regulations and protocols (as noted in the previous sections of this report) to ensure that the learning outcomes for each PhD programme and study course are foreseen, provided and duly verified within the study program,

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself: the learning outcomes are defined and monitored and evaluated by professors and programme managers, which is relevant solution and in compliance with regulatives.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.3. The results of doctoral studies and procedures for their evaluation

Standard B.3.1. Doctoral students capitalize on the research through presentations at scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products and service orders.

Performance Indicator B.3.1.1. *For the doctoral school there are in place mechanisms for valorification of the results of doctoral studies in accordance with the specificity of the particular domain (i.e. technological transfer, products, patents in the case of exact sciences; products and services for social sciences and humanities; festivals, contests, recitals, sports competitions; cultural-arts orders in the vocational domain; presentations at national and international conferences, publication of research results in national and international publications, engaging doctoral students in writing research-development projects etc.)*

PhD students at ASE have several opportunities to research, join research projects, publish with colleagues or supervisors, attend conferences etc. They have support to do so in many levels, also financial support for attending conferences and publishing. The students publish articles with relevant scientific content, also in scientific journals indexed in international databases. Many research centres at ASE have research projects, with at least one PhD student involved. And research centres also have their own scientific journals and some of them are already indexed in international databases. Every project in research centres All PhD students who have completed their doctoral studies during the last five years participated in at least one prestigious international scientific event (held in Romania or abroad), given that this is stipulated in the minimum criteria for defending the doctoral thesis (Annex SDAA-32).

⁵ Or by what the graduate should know, understand and to be able to do, according to the provisions of the Methodology regarding inscription and registration of higher education qualifications in the the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (RNCIS) approved by the Order No.3475/2017 with subsequent amendments and additions.



Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself. According to documentation and interviews with stakeholders, there is a lot of support and opportunities for research and publications, a conference attendance and mobilities. Even if the information are public and open, there are some students, that can not cope and miss the opportunities or fail to join.

Recommendations: More emphasis and individual support should be given to students who are not proactive and motivated to find opportunities on their own. All students should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ASE for research work.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.4. Quality of doctoral theses

Standard B.4.1. Doctoral theses fulfil high quality standards

- *general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator B.4.1.1. *At the level of IOSUD, the percentage of theses non- validated, at the level of General Council of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNADTCU), without the right of further amendments and re-organizing the process of public defending, is not exceeding 5% in the last 5 years.*

There is no evidence, that doctoral theses in the evaluation period would be non- validated before defense.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- *general description of domain analysis.*

Criterion C.1. Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system

Standard C.1.1. There are an institutional framework and procedures in place and relevant internal quality assurance policies, applied for monitoring the internal quality assurance.

Performance Indicator C.1.1.1. *The IOSUD shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the doctoral school(s), the following assessed criteria being mandatory:*

The IOSUD-ASE has developed and regularly applies an internal evaluation and monitoring procedure for assessing and monitoring the evolution of doctoral schools. This includes the scientific work of PhD supervisors, the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity, as well as the procedures and rules on the basis of which doctoral studies are organised (Annex CSUD-6). *The ASE provides for Phd programmes all necessary conditions as stated in previous sections of the report, including: the scientific work of Doctoral advisors; the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity; the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized; the academic and social services (including participation to various events, publication of papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.*



In general, according to documentation and meetings with students and supervisors, PhD students benefit, in addition to the coordination provided by the scientific supervisor, from the advice/guidance of some functional guidance commissions, commissions established with the PhD supervisor from the time of registration. The involvement of the guidance commission in advising PhD students is reflected in the written feedback or in the regular meetings, which are activities complementary to those offered by the scientific PhD supervisor. The functionality of the guidance commission is demonstrated by joint publications or scientific communications involving the cooperation of PhD students with the members of the guidance commission, electronic correspondence focused on the feedback provided to PhD students by the members of the commission (Annex SDAA-28), as well as by the organization of scientific seminars during the academic year at which the members of the guidance commission are present (Annex SDAA-29).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ASE demonstrates the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance. But there are still some place for improvement. Nevertheless, some students expressed the need for even more intensive support and more frequent communication with the supervisor, especially for clearer guidelines regarding publications at the very beginning of their studies.

Recommendations: Find ways to even more intensive support and more frequent communication between specific students and the supervisor, especially for clearer guidelines regarding publications at the very beginning of their studies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.1.1.2. *Students' associations and, according to the case, representatives of students organise elections in the community of doctoral students, for positions in the CSUD, by universal vote, direct and secret, all doctoral students having the right of electing or being elected.*

Based on the statements made in interviews with management and students, elections are regularly held among students for all bodies where they are envisaged as members. The composition of the bodies is made public.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Students have representatives in all ASE bodies and the elections are implemented regularly.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.1.1.3. *Students' associations and, according to the case, representatives of students organise elections in the community of doctoral students at the level of each doctoral school, for positions in the councils of doctoral schools, by universal vote, direct and secret, all doctoral students having the right of electing or being elected.*

Based on the statements made in interviews with management and students, elections are regularly held among students for all bodies where they are envisaged as members. The composition of the bodies is made public.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Performance Indicator *C.1.1.4. *Following the internal evaluation, IOSUD and the doctoral schools draft strategies and policies aiming to eliminate the identified deficiencies and to stimulate scientific and academic performance of IOSUD.*

AES has some strategies and policies aiming to eliminate the identified deficiencies and to stimulate scientific and academic performance of IOSUD. Especially in the field of raising the quality of scientific publications of employees and in promoting publishing for students, some measures have been taken which have shown good results. There are several ways to obtain feedback from teachers, supervisors and students, later mostly with questionnaires. There are and have been implemented mechanisms for collecting feedback from PhD students - questionnaire to assess the degree of satisfaction of doctoral students (Annex CSUD 68). On this basis, they prepare analyzes and proposals for corrective measures, in accordance with the prescribed internal procedures. The authorities at school and AES level approve the proposed measures and determine the activities, deadlines and responsible bodies. Unfortunately, this monitoring plan for improvements mostly lacks concrete dates and criteria for measuring success. Most measures are labeled "permanent task". No data on the systematic collection of feedback from other stakeholders can be traced. Nor is it about the systematic treatment of self-evaluation reports. Students state that they have access to results based on demand. The quality loop is not fully concluded. There is still much room for improvement in this area.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Questionnaires for students are implemented, but no also for other stakeholders like employers, teachers, partners. The results of evaluation are not being communicated systematically to all stakeholders. The culture of quality is not present in all areas of ASE. The quality circle is not always closed.

Recommendations: Find ways to promote quality culture at ASE, to communicate evaluation results and actions with all stakeholders and include them in providing feedback on regular basis.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.2. Transparency of information and accessibility of learning resources

Standard C.2.1. Information of interest to doctoral students, future candidates and public interest information is available for electronic format consultation.

Performance Indicator C.2.1.1. *The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as:*

(a) the IOSUD/Doctoral School regulation; The Doctoral Regulation is posted on the page of each doctoral school: <http://doctorat.ase.ro>

https://senat.ase.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/20190208/Hot.Senat%20nr.%2016_Reg.sc.doc.AA.pdf ,

(b) the admission regulation - <http://doctorat.ase.ro>; (c) the doctoral studies contract; <http://doctorat.ase.ro/>, (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis; <http://doctorat.ase.ro/procedura-sustinere5Content> of study programmes

<http://doctorat.ase.ro/planificarea-cursurilor-pentru-studentii-ase-bucuresti-din-cadrul-tutoror-scolilor-doctorale---semestrul->

-, (e) the content of the training study program based on advanced academic studies; <http://doctorat.ase.ro/planificarea-cursurilor-pentru-studentii-ase-bucuresti-din-cadrul-tutoror-scolilor-doctorale---semestrul->



1<http://doctorat.ase.ro/Media/Default/Cursuri/LISTA%20DISCIPLINELOR%20ANUL%201%20AFISATA%20PE%20SITE.pdf>, (f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data; <http://doctorat.ase.ro>http://doctorat.ase.ro/Media/Default/Documente/Admitere%202021/Locuri%20si%20teme%20admitere%20doctorat_Places%20and%20themes%20doctoral%20admission-2021-2022.pdf, (g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; Advisor); <http://doctorat.ase.ro/simur.ase.ro>, (h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis; <http://doctorat.ase.ro/Media/Default/Documente/Ghid%20Elaborare%20Teza%20Doctorat%202017-2018.pdf>, (i) information on the opportunities for doctoral students aiming to attend conferences, to publish articles, awarding scholarships etc., (j) links to the doctoral theses's summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation. <http://doctorat.ase.ro/anuturi-sustineri-publice-teze-de-doctorat>

For foreign students, there are regulations available in english language (<http://doctorat.ase.ro/english-2>): Methodology, DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR THE EU CITIZENS ADMISSION CONTEST 2021 -2022, DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR THE non-EU CITIZENS ADMISSION CONTEST 2021 -2022, Distribution of seats financed from the state budget and those paying tuition fee, Number of places and research themes, Calendar, Forms and statements, Documents required for certification of diplomas, Application for the issuance of letter of acceptance to studies and some other documents in English: Methodology of evaluation and defense of the PhD thesis - Short Version, PhD THESIS WRITING GUIDE, Study Fees for PhD Programmes, Contract for Doctoral Studies-first Year 2020-2021 COTUTELLE, Contract for Doctoral Studies-first Year 2020-2021, Individual plan for PhD Studies, StudyFees PhD, Post-Doc 2020-2021

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: All methodologies and regulations for the organization and conduct of admission competitions are public and any other information of public interest is available to those interested on the site www.ase.ro, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection. For foreign students the information on website is not equivalent to the information in Romanian language.

Recommendation: Improve the information on the website for foreign students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard C.2.2. The IOSUD/The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with access to the resources needed for conducting doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.1. All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of the their thesis.

The ASE Library (www.biblioteca.ase.ro), provides free of charge the collection of monographic publications, periodicals, electronic resources, access to scientific databases that cover the Romanian and foreign specialized literature recommended in the subject sheets of the university curriculum, elaborated and constantly updated within the library. It has an appropriate number of domestic and foreign



volumes as well as subscriptions to the main dedicated magazines (Annex IOSUD-69, Annex IOSUD-70).

For PhD students it is the most important, that the library provides access to bibliographic databases with full-text content, bibliometric and statistical, with local or online access, depending on the specifics of the platform: Jstor Business Collection I & IV, Thomson Reuters Eikon, Bloomberg Finance, CEEOL, Audit Analytics, access to the ZP Corporate platform, as well as other electronic resources with scientific journals, resources available through the Anelis Plus Association within the framework of the National Electronic Access to Scientific Resources for Supporting the Research and Education System in Romania-Anelis Plus 2020 : Swisser ScienceDirect Freedom Collection, ProQuest Central, Emerald Management Xtra, Clarivate Analytics (Thomson ISI), Scopus, CAB ebooks, DeGruyter ebooks, Swiss ebooks Freedom Collection. Also, for Anelis Plus and institutionally subscribed resources that allow remote access, mobile access is provided based on a mobile access account configured and validated from the ASE intranet, as well as from outside the ASE # from home. In addition, the ASE Library users have access to collections of eBooks purchased with continuous access by the institution. There is also available the online library of courses in the ASE Publishing House, an online library that includes courses, textbooks, application papers, etc., the authors being ASE teachers, and the works are published under the umbrella of the university publishing house.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: All doctoral students have free access to platforms providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis and to other study materials and they are very satisfied with this solution. One of the good practices is also introduction of online library courses materials, prepared by the ASE professors.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.2. *Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.*

At the ASE level, each student, including PhD students has access to verify the similarity of the written scientific papers. PhD students have access, upon request, to this electronic system to verify the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic creations, at <http://dmci.ase.ro/index.php/antiplagiat>.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Antiplagiarism is very important, as expressed by students and teachers during the interviews. It would be an improvement, if verifying similarity would become obligatory during the study, not only at the end.

Recommendations: Introduce verifying similarity of student and teachers work as obligatory during the study for written assignments.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.3. *All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.*



All PhD students have permanent access to the halls and laboratories of their study field and the scientific research laboratories of the relevant departments are made available to them (Annexes IOSUD-10, IOSUD-11).

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: It was confirmed from teachers, researchers and students, that they have access to laboratories and equipment for their research activities and students find this very helpful.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

Standard C.3.1. IOSUD/Doctoral school has a strategy in place and it is applied to enhance the internationalization of doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.1. *IOSUD, for every doctoral school, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.*

At the ASE level there is an internationalization strategy (Annex IOSUD-05) developed for the period 2016-2027 in which courses of action are considered to ensure a greater internationalization of the university studies organized within the university, including doctoral studies. ASE has concluded with universities from abroad mobility agreements (Annex IOSUD-71) which allow doctoral students and teachers to participate in mobility internships. As an example, during the academic year 2019-2020, out of the 84 PhD students from the Doctoral School of Business Administration who defended their doctoral thesis during the evaluated period, 84 participated with papers in international conferences held abroad, which represents a percentage of 100% (Annex IOSUD-72)

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: every doctoral student is involved in some kind of mobility abroad before defense of the thesis and this is good approach.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.2. *IOSUD supports, including providing financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.*

During the period under review, international experts were invited to give courses/lectures or participated on conferences. Since 2015 to 2021 there were 97 foreign professors as guests at ASE doctoral studies (Annex CSUD-73).



Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: ASE is giving a high importance to attracting guest lecturers and students report, they are very satisfied with the opportunities to learn something from new perspectives.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.3. *At least 10% of the doctoral theses of every doctoral schools of the IOSUD are drafted and/or submitted in an international foreign language or are organised in international co-tutelage.*

The internationalization of the activities within the SDAA is supported by the IOSUD, by participating in educational fairs to attract international PhD students, and by concluding partnerships / collaborations with prestigious universities (Annex CSUD-74). There are several co-optations in the guidance commissions of PhD students. The number of foreign students is relatively high each year. Because of mixed supervisory teams and because of foreign students, it would be realistic to expect more than 10% of theses drafted in foreign language. As supervisors reported, this number is somewhere higher, and somewhere lower, but the trend is raising. On the ASE website it is mentioned, that the thesis can be prepared in foreign languages.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: The organization of doctoral studies, foreign guest lecturers, foreign students, mixed teams for supervision of thesis – all this is leading to the growth of the number of theses in foreign language.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.4. *The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees⁶ etc.).*

The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by ASE through concrete measures with participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees, inviting guest lecturers, by attending international conferences and supporting the expenses for this activity and others. They also plan to increase the number of international research grants, attendance to international conferences, international mobility of PhD students till 2027.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: in the plan for 2027 for internationalization, there are no concrete steps taken on how the desired figures will be achieved and this did not guarantee that the target would be achieved.

Recommendations: It would be advisable to make an analysis of the reservations in the implementation of internationalization in both students and professors and to find out what can be done to improve the response.

⁶ Doctoral studies are completed by presenting the doctoral thesis in public session in front of a committee whose members hear and judge the final public presentation of the thesis



The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.4. System for assurance of ethical and academic integrity

Standard C.4.1. IOSUD/Doctoral school has a functional and efficient system in place for prevention and assuring ethical and academic integrity norms

- *general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator C.4.1.1. *IOSUD, applies the current provisions regulating ethics, deontology/academic integrity, respectively to academic freedom. IOSUD monitors and permanently evaluates these practices and can prove they are applied to all activities and engagement of students in all these processes, and the results of the monitoring is made public yearly or whenever it becomes necessary.*

AES applies the current provisions regulating ethics, deontology/academic integrity, respectively to academic freedom and has developed:

- *policies based on prevention regarding possible violations of the Code of ethics and academic integrity, demonstrated by public postionings, studies, analyses or measures taken, they are aslo included in implementing each study course and supervising activities;*
- *practices and mechanisms for preventing fraud, from an institutional perspective as well as from the perspective of the doctoral students, there are protocols to react and the possibilities to Comission for ethics;*
- *practices for preventing possible fraud in academic activity, research or any other activity, including active measures for preventing and avoiding plagiarism of any kind, as well as promoting ethical and integrity/deontology principles or observing intellectual property norms, authors' rights and other related rights, among all members of the academic community – this is done with the help of antiplagiarism program, that Phd students and professors can use before publishing;*
- *administrative instruments which allow applying effective and eliminatory sanctions, one of the important ones is Comission for ethics;*
- *mechanisms and measures to assure equal opportunities and protection against intolerance and discrimination of any kind, the apeal can be made to supervisor, to the management or to the comission for ethics;*

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself, all the above mentioned activities are ongoing, although there is no evidence, regarding the discussioin with the chairman of this body, that the Ethics Commission is aware of the results of the proceedings it has considered.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.4.1.2. *All intimations regarding suspicion of plagiarism related to doctoral theses have been analysed and resolved by the IOSUD within the time interval legally established for expressing in writing its position regarding the intimation received.*



We do not have information on such events as part of the review of documentation and interviews.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.4.1.3. *Annual Reports of the Ethics commission of the IOSUD contain information on the stage of solving each case of intimation or own-initiative intimation regarding violation of norms or ethical aspects relevant for university doctoral studies. description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself.*

Annual Reports of the Ethics commission of the ASE contain information on the stage of solving each case of intimation or own-initiative intimation regarding violation of norms or ethical aspects relevant for university doctoral studies.

Analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself: Ethics commission reports on the applications considered and draws up the minutes, but does not follow the conclusions of the individual hearings adopted at the higher level - the results of the proceedings it has considered.

Recommendations: Recommendations: Ethics commission should take tracks on the decisions made of their investigated case. And find ways to raise awareness and prevention about academic integrity and fraud prevention.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.4.1.4. *The measures taken by IOSUD after the final decision of CNADTCU to withdraw the title of "doctor" following accusations of plagiarism have addressed all the aspects mentioned in CNADTCU's decision and in the current legislation.*

The measures to withdraw the title "doctor" are provided for and prescribed in the ASE regulations, but we do not have information on such events as part of the review of documentation and interviews.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.4.1.5. *The measures aiming to prevent academic fraud in the doctoral studies, taken by IOSUD, could be:*

- a) Suspension of the right to advise newly enrolled doctoral students, for a period of 3 years, in the case of doctoral advisors having coordinated a doctoral thesis with a definitive decision of withdrawal of the "doctor" title for plagiarism;*
- b) Exclusion from the IOSUD of the doctoral advisor having coordinated at least two doctoral theses with definitive decisions of withdrawal of the "doctor" title for plagiarism;*
- c) Suspension of the right to organize the admission process of new doctoral students in the Doctoral studies domain, for a period of 2 years, if in the respective domain a doctoral thesis has been finalized and defended with a definitive decision of withdrawal of the "doctor" title for plagiarism.*



The measures *aiming to prevent academic fraud in the doctoral studies* are provided for and prescribed in the ASE regulations and are in compliance with national legislation, but we do not have information on such events as part of the review of documentation and interviews.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *C.4.1.6. *The scientific reviewers members in the commissions for public defense of two or more doctoral theses with definitive decisions of withdrawal of the “doctor” title for plagiarism, have not been nominated in other commissions for public defence of doctoral theses for a period of at least 3 years.*

We do not have information on such events as part of the review of documentation and interviews

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.4.1.7. *IOSUD has a database open to the public containing all the doctoral theses defended in the institution beginning at least in 2016 in a format including: the domain, author, doctoral advisor, title of the thesis and the thesis in electronic format (if there is an agreement of the author).*

AES has a database open to the public containing all the doctoral theses defended in the institution beginning at least in 2016 in a format including: the domain, author, doctoral advisor, title of the thesis and the resume in Romanian and English. The thesis in electronic format (if there is an agreement of the author) could be available <http://doctorat.ase.ro/anunt-sustinere-publica-teza-de-doctorat-nastase-d-raluca>

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths:</u>	<u>Weaknesses:</u>
Versatile, although mostly informal integration of the business environment, including smaller paid projects	More opportunities for students to collaborate and exchange with colleagues from other fields of study
Ethics Commission co-led by professor of ethics	Encouraging all students to join research projects at AES
Teachers - the relationship of mentoring and teaching obligations	Some students struggle to publish, they need more opportunities, guidance and support
Teachers – their growth in quality and quantity regarding important international publications	There is not enough systematic help for students at risk of dropout
Successful management measures for the growth of the quality of teachers' research work	Some supervisors are still very busy with the number of mentees

<p>Encouraging students to jointly publish and participate in AES projects</p> <p>AES offers many research opportunities that students can get involved in</p> <p>Mixed student teams from different Docotoral schools</p> <p>Additional courses for students on how to successfully publish in scientific journals</p>	<p>Common subjects in doctoral school curricula have so far not been taught in English, to the detriment of international students</p> <p>The share of doctoral dissertations written in a foreign language is relatively low</p> <p>More help and support for students who do not have prior knowledge in the field of apology and have problems with the research field - additional courses or seminars</p> <p>The results of evaluations are not systematically communicated with stakeholders</p> <p>Not all stakeholders are involved in obtaining feedback and monitoring results and measures (employers, employees)</p> <p>the information on the website for international students is very sparse compared to the official ASE website</p>
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>Ethics Commission co-led by professor of ethics should take tracks on the decisions made of their investigated case</p> <p>developing a portal for employers to help them connect with students</p> <p>More formalized cooperation with employers, to acquire more business projects, be more proactive on the AES side.</p> <p>Leverage a number of international agreements for concrete projects and programs, which are now based mainly on personal rather than formal contacts</p> <p>Several foreign evaluators in the defense commissions of the Phd thesis, the number should rise</p> <p>Develop all the scientific journals from the research centres to enter international databases</p>	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <p>The culture of quality in AES is not internalized by employees and students, it is understood primarily as an administrative task</p> <p>Quality monitoring feedback is not provided, poor feedback on results and actions to all stakeholders</p> <p>Feedback monitoring is not systematic and targeted at all stakeholders (employees, teachers, employers, partners)</p> <p>Strengthen mixed groups of supervisors to ensure an international as well as an objective scientific component</p> <p>Raise awarenes and prevention about academic integrity and fraud</p> <p>Find ways to get all PhD students involved in AES research projects</p>

<p>and thus help students to the required publications</p> <p>extend the use of the anti-plagiarism program as an obligation to all written obligations of students and to all published texts, including from professors</p>	<p>Students do not decide how to spend the money (10%) intended for their individual support</p> <p>Falling number of state grants for the economic field - to find new sources of funding and scholarships</p>
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V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (*, C)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1	A 1.2.2.	Antiplagiarism operational procedure	fulfilled	Antiplagiarism program should be introduced and became obligatory in the study process for all written assignments and also for all publications, made by students or teachers.
2	A 2.1.1.	Conditions for research	fulfilled	Find ways to support and motivate all doctoral students to join research projects led at ASE and to make use of all research facilities.
3	A 2.1.2.	Collaboration agreements	fulfilled	There are many agreements signed and there is a lot of room fro these agreements to be really applied into practical colaborations, which will not depend mostly on personal acquaintances.
4	A 3.1.1.	supervising	fulfilled	Short-term measures need to be taken to change the supervisors' burden and to establish more mixed supervising teams.
5	B 1.1.2.	Preventing dropouts	fulfilled	Intensify support to students before dropout. Make analysis, what are the main reasons and prevent them.
6	B 2.1.1.	Research methodology	fulfilled	Offer the research course also in english for all foreign students and find ways to support students, that struggle with basics and this course is not enough to provide them necessary researc skills.

7	B 3.1.1.	Opportunities for research and publication	fulfilled	More emphasis and individual support should be given to students who are not proactive and motivated to find opportunities on their own. All students should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ASE for research work.
8	C 1.1.1.	Internal quality assurance	fulfilled	Find ways to even more intensive support and more frequent communication between specific students and the supervisor, especially for clearer guidelines regarding publications at the very beginning of their studies.
9	C 1.1.4	questionares	fulfilled	Find ways to promote quality culture at ASE, to communicate evaluation results and actions with all stakeholders and include them in providing feedback on regular basis.
10	C 2.1.1.	admission	fulfilled	Improve the information on the website for foreign students.
11	C 2.2.2.	antiplagiarism	fulfilled	Introduce verifying similarity of student and teachers work as obligatory during the study for written assignments.
12	C 3.1.4.	intarnationalization	fulfilled	It would be advisable to make an analysis of the reservations in the implementation of internationalization in both students and professors and to find out what can be done to improve the response.
13	C 4.1.3.	Ethics comission	fulfilled	Ethics commission should take tracks on the decissions made of their investigated case. And find ways to raise awareness and prevention about academic integrity and fraud prevention.



VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

All performance indicators regarding external evaluation of IOSUD are fullfield.

The specific regulations and their application at ASE are in accordance with national law and made public and accessible. An extremely large number of highly motivated peers in various stakeholder groups took part in the interviews. Obviously, ASE is a reputable institution in the eyes of employees, students and the business environment. Problems in the field of state financing, obtaining international projects, reviving signed international agreements, etc. were also discussed openly. The school management has a clear picture of the situation and ambitious plans on how to remedy the shortcomings.

ASE has effective an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background as well as an appropriate operational procedure Antiplagiarism Verification software program, used mostly for theses.

Recommendation: Antiplagiarism program should be introduced and became obligatory in the study process for all written assignments and also for all publications, made by students or teachers.

Doctoral schools and research centres have very good conditions for research, regarding spaces, equipment and other infrastructure. The scientific research carried out within the ASE has sufficient financial, logistical and human resources to achieve the proposed objectives. Research centres managers are very capable, motivated and ambitious, doctoral students have many opportunities to join the research teams, but not all are encouraged enough to join.

Recommendation: Find ways to support and motivate all doctoral students to join research projects led at ASE and to make use of all research facilities.

ASE and her entities has several collaboration agreements with higher education institutions, research institutes, research networks for joint partnerships and have access for using various research infrastructures, mostly databases and joint publications; the offer for research services is presented publicly using a dedicated platform, which is appropriate.

Recommendation: There are already so many agreements signed, but there is a lot of room for these agreements to be really applied into practical collaborations, which will not depend mostly on personal acquaintances.

Doctoral schools are very active in applying for projects and funding, but this is a long term strategy, that needs a lot of internal support. The reportings were about some grants and fundings, that were a success in the past, which is very good experience.

Judging by the documentation and the interviews with stakeholders, it is obvious that there are still a few teachers at ASE who are overburdened with mentoring, which is not good for the quality of theses, for students or for supervisors.

Recommendation: Short-term measures need to be taken to change the supervisors burden and to establish more mixed supervising teams.

The majority of teaching staff at ASE has a full-time employment contract at the institution, which is very good. Selection criteria for students are clear, consistent and include all elements prescribed by legislation.

Support programmes for preventing dropouts were not observed, which is a shortcoming. The management was not sure about the main reasons for dropping out and about the measures taken, to prevent them, which is not good. Students reported about situations, when they needed information and focus and some more help and it was mostly connected with opportunities to make a mandatory publication.



Recommendations: Intensify support to students before dropout. Make analysis, what are the main reasons and prevent them.

Research methodology is one of two major courses in all doctoral schools at ASE, which is necessary and a good solution. They were not held in English for foreign students in the past. Some students coming from other fields would also need some more knowledge about research, besides this course.

Recommendations: Offer the research course also in English for all foreign students and find ways to support students, that struggle with research basics and this course is not enough to provide them necessary research skills.

Ethics and academic integrity is one of two major courses in all doctoral schools at ASE, which is necessary and a very good solution. Unfortunately, it was not held in English for foreign students in the past. The subjects are also promoted within other study courses, which is very important to build awareness and prevention.

The learning outcomes are defined, monitored and evaluated by professors and programme managers, which is relevant solution and in compliance with regulations.

According to documentation and interviews with stakeholders, there is a lot of support and opportunities for students for research and publications, a conference attendance and mobilities. Even if the information are public and open, there are some students, that can't cope and miss the opportunities or fail to join.

Recommendations: More emphasis and individual support should be given to students who are not proactive and motivated to find opportunities on their own. All students should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ASE for research work.

ASE demonstrates the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance. But there are still some place for improvement. Nevertheless, some students expressed the need for even more intensive support and more frequent communication with the supervisor, especially for clearer guidelines regarding publications at the very beginning of their studies.

Recommendations: Find ways to even more intensive support and more frequent communication between specific students and the supervisor, especially for clearer guidelines regarding publications at the very beginning of their studies.

Students have representatives in all ASE bodies and the elections are implemented regularly.

Questionnaires for students are implemented, but not also for other stakeholders like employers, teachers, partners. The results of evaluation are not being communicated systematically to all stakeholders. The culture of quality is not present in all areas of ASE. The quality circle is not always closed.

Recommendations: Find ways to promote quality culture at ASE, to systematically communicate evaluation results and actions with all stakeholders and include them in providing feedback on regular basis.

All methodologies and regulations for the organization and conduct of admission competitions are public and any other information of public interest is available to those interested on the site www.ase.ro, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection. For foreign students the information on website is not equivalent to the information in Romanian language.

Recommendation: Improve the information on the website for foreign students.



All doctoral students have free access to platforms providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis and to other study materials and they are very satisfied with this solution. One of the good practices is also introduction of online library courses materials, prepared by the ASE professors.

Anti-plagiarism is very important, as expressed by students and teachers during the interviews. It would be an improvement, if verifying similarity would become obligatory during the study, not only at the end.

Recommendation: Introduce verifying similarity of student and teachers work as obligatory during the study for written assignments.

It was confirmed from teachers, researchers and students, that they have access to laboratories and equipment for their research activities and students find this very helpful. Every doctoral student is involved in some kind of mobility abroad before defense of the thesis and this is a good approach. ASE is giving a high importance to attracting guest lecturers and students report, they are very satisfied with the opportunities to learn something from new perspectives. The organization of doctoral studies, foreign guest lecturers, foreign students, mixed teams for supervision of thesis – all this is leading to the growth of the number of theses in foreign language.

In the plan for 2027 for internationalization, there are no concrete steps taken on how the desired figures will be achieved and this does not guarantee that the target would be achieved.

Recommendations: It would be advisable to make an analysis of the reservations in the implementation of internationalization in both students and professors and to find out what can be done to improve the response.

A lot of activities regarding ethics are ongoing, although there is no evidence, regarding the discussion with the chairman of this body, that the Ethics Commission is aware of the results of the proceedings it has considered. Ethics commission reports on the applications considered and draws up the minutes, but does not follow the conclusions of the individual hearings adopted at the higher level - the results of the proceedings it has considered.

Recommendations: Ethics commission should take track on the decisions made of their investigated case. And find ways to raise awareness and prevention about academic integrity and fraud prevention.

All indicators are fulfilled. The decision of IOSUD evaluation should be positive.

Prof. univ. dr. MERKAČ SKOK Marjana – International expert, University of Novo mesto, Slovenia, Ljubljana, 27. 8. 2021