

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education



External Evaluation Report (REE) for the procedure for obtaining a maintaining accreditation (MAC) of Doctoral Study Domain

Higher Education Institution/ Education Provider Organization:	"Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu
Doctoral School:	of Theology
Doctoral Domain:	Theology
The objective of the external evaluation:	Maintaining accreditation (MAC)



Members of the ARACIS Evaluation Panel

No.	Last Name and First Name	Team role	Signature
1.	TAUWINKL, Wilhelm	Expert evaluator	
2.	GEORGI, Porphyrios	International Expert evaluator	
3.	PĂTRAȘCU, Andrei-Cristian	PhD Student ExpertEvaluator	

I. Introduction

This External Evaluation Report was drafted in the context of the periodic external quality evaluation conducted by ARACIS for the purpose of maintaining the accreditation of the field of doctoral studies in Theology, organized by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (ULBS). The evaluation visit took place between 17 and 19 June 2026. The report mainly refers to the period since the previous external evaluation and, where relevant, to the most recent five-year period documented by the institution. The external quality evaluation panel consisted of Assoc. Prof. Wilhelm TAUWINKL, PhD, University of Bucharest, expert evaluator; Rev. Prof. Porphyrios GEORGI, PhD, University of Balamand, international expert evaluator; and Andrei-Cristian PĂTRAȘCU, PhD candidate, University of Craiova, doctoral student evaluator. The panel assessed compliance with the applicable ARACIS standards and performance indicators concerning institutional capacity, educational effectiveness and quality management, based on the evidence submitted by ULBS and on information collected during the evaluation process.

ULBS is a public, non-profit higher education institution established in 1990, with academic origins going back to the Institute of Higher Education in Sibiu, created in 1976. Its mission is centred on advanced education and research, the training of highly qualified human resources, the generation and dissemination of knowledge, and the transfer of competences to society. ULBS comprises nine faculties and six doctoral schools, with 14,736 students, including 471 doctoral students. Doctoral studies are coordinated through the university structures responsible for doctoral education, including the Council for Doctoral Studies (CSUD), the doctoral schools and the relevant administrative services. Doctoral education is organized in six doctoral schools covering 16 doctoral study fields. Following the 2021 ARACIS external evaluation of ULBS as an institution organizing doctoral studies and of its doctoral study fields, the university implemented an action plan, including the reorganization of the former Interdisciplinary Doctoral School into several doctoral schools, formalized by Ministerial Order No. 6067/2022. In 2021, ULBS obtained the rating "High degree of confidence" and maintained its accreditation for organizing doctoral study programmes.

The field of doctoral studies in Theology is organized within the Doctoral School of Theology. Since the previous evaluation, the main institutional change has been the placement of Theology within a distinct doctoral school. At the time of the evaluation, the field had 75 doctoral students and 14 doctoral supervisors. During the last five years, 27 doctoral students obtained the scientific title of doctor in Theology. The mission of the field is to train highly qualified specialists and researchers in Theology, able to contribute to theological research, religious institutions and the wider academic and ecclesial community.

II. Methods used

The evaluation methodology combined documentary analysis with information collected during the on-site visit and through meetings with relevant stakeholders. The panel analysed the Internal Evaluation Report, its annexes, and the documents and web pages made available by ULBS. No additional clarifications were requested before the visit.

The on-site visit included the inspection of resources used for doctoral education and research, including teaching rooms, the library and research centres. The panel held meetings with the management, the team that prepared the Internal Evaluation Report, doctoral supervisors, employers and beneficiaries, doctoral students, graduates, research-centre representatives, and Quality Assurance structures.

The panel used triangulation of evidence, comparing the Internal Evaluation Report and its annexes with online information, observations made during the visit and information obtained from stakeholders. The assessment focused on compliance with ARACIS standards and indicators, strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations.

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.
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The field of Theology at ULBS functions via structured administrative bodies, specifically the Doctoral School of Theology (SDT), established as a standalone unit under Ministerial Order No. 6067/2022 to optimize targeted domain governance. Operations are governed by a synchronized hierarchy comprising the [ULBS Charter](#), [general doctoral studies regulations](#), and the specific [SDT Regulation](#), which are reviewed periodically. During the site visit, the expert panel verified through management and internal quality commission (SACCIM, SCEAC) interviews that these components actively monitor academic workflows and individual student progress (see [Meeting minutes](#)).

Analysis of the Situation: Comprehensive evaluation shows that the school's structural components function smoothly with clear operational responsibilities, showing no legal or structural contradictions with Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 or the Framework Regulation. However, some omissions have been identified within this regulatory layer: the regulations completely lack provisions governing the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in documentation, translation, or writing. Furthermore, the formalization of external stakeholder feedback loops is legally incomplete, and some historical reports suffer from poor digital traceability on the university interface.

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.
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The Internal Evaluation Report (IER, p. 20) states that the opinions of doctoral students, doctoral supervisors, and other stakeholders are considered in the development and revision of methodologies and regulations. This process is supported by the [University Charter](#), institutional regulations, the [university strategy](#), and [management reports](#). Formal and informal consultation mechanisms are in place.

Analysis of the Situation: The indicator requires evidence that stakeholders are involved in the adoption and revision of institutional regulations. The submitted documents confirm the existence of an institutional framework and consultation mechanisms. However, only limited evidence is provided regarding the actual impact of stakeholder feedback on the revision of methodologies and regulations. **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
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environment for living and studying, including for disabled persons. Optimal venues are also provided for activities of the staff. Such venues are adequately equipped.

ULBS legally administers the premises used by the Faculty of Theology, comprising a total area of 4,094 sq m under public state ownership. According to the IER (pp. 21–22) and the site visit, the premises include [spaces](#) for advanced coursework, doctoral supervision, library study, research and administrative activities, together with access to institutional digital resources. The facilities are functional and generally appropriate for doctoral education and staff activities. Accessibility is supported by institutional arrangements for persons with disabilities, as also illustrated by the successful public defence of a doctoral thesis by a student with physical disabilities in 2024. The Theology doctoral field also has access to the facilities of its accredited research centres.

Analysis of the situation: ULBS legally holds and provides the premises necessary for the educational, research and administrative activities of the Theology doctoral field. The spaces are functional, appropriately equipped for their intended purposes and accessible to doctoral students, staff and persons with disabilities. The library and research-centre facilities complement the teaching, supervision and administrative spaces and contribute to an environment conducive to doctoral study and research. The essential requirements concerning legal possession, adequacy, equipment and accessibility of the premises are therefore met. Further development of specialized documentary resources and stronger use of the research centres by doctoral students would enhance the existing environment but do not affect fulfilment of this indicator; these matters are addressed more directly under the relevant indicators in Domain B.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

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.
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The IER (p. 22) states that [movable](#) and [immovable](#) assets are managed and maintained through institutional budget allocations, regular repairs, cleaning and modernization activities. During the site visit, the premises were found to be clean, functional and generally suitable for teaching, research and administrative activities. Nevertheless, the panel observed localized maintenance shortcomings in some sanitary facilities and items of classroom furniture, including missing fittings and visibly worn or damaged surfaces.

Analysis of the situation: Overall, the material resources remain functional and provide adequate conditions for study, research and work. The shortcomings observed during the visit do not substantially restrict the use of the premises, but indicate the need for more systematic preventive maintenance and the timely repair or replacement of damaged items.

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.
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SDT has 14 active doctoral supervisors (IER, p. 23-24) who fully meet the mandatory national CNATDCU qualifications ([Appendix IPA311 FV](#)). The advanced university training program is staffed by qualified internal professors (IER, p. 23). Notably, the mandatory [Academic Ethics and Integrity course](#) is taught by a [literature specialist](#). This assignment was discussed during the evaluation site visit regarding the correlation between cross-disciplinary course profiles and specific curriculum requirements.

Analysis of the situation. The human resources are numerically and qualitatively adequate to sustain the theological doctoral domain. Utilizing a literature specialist for academic integrity is functionally acceptable

because the course targets text-level integrity, academic writing, and plagiarism detection. However, as noted in the evaluation minutes, the institutional framework must continuously justify this alignment to ensure that course holders' profiles directly match the targeted competencies. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Indicator I.P.A.3.1.2 The HEI ensures professional and personal development for its staff.

The IER (p. 24) states that ULBS supports the professional and personal development of its academic staff through institutional strategic planning, [Erasmus+ mobility](#) opportunities, participation in conferences and research activities, and access to international academic cooperation. The [Multi-Annual Strategic Plan](#) identifies continuous staff training as an area requiring further development. Discussions during the evaluation visit also indicated that doctoral supervisors combine substantial teaching, research and supervisory responsibilities and that the university does not currently operate a systematic sabbatical or research-leave scheme.

Analysis of the situation: The available evidence confirms that ULBS provides doctoral supervisors with opportunities for professional and personal development through academic mobility, research, conferences and international cooperation. The identification of continuous training as a strategic priority demonstrates institutional awareness of the need to extend and improve the existing provision. Although professional-development activities could be organised more systematically and tailored more closely to the specific needs of doctoral supervision, these limitations do not negate the existence and practical accessibility of development opportunities. Similarly, institutionalised sabbatical or research-leave arrangements could strengthen the capacity of supervisors to pursue advanced research, but their absence does not in itself demonstrate non-fulfilment of the indicator. The essential requirement is therefore met. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Standard S.A.3.2. Recruitment procedures. Teaching staff recruitment procedures compliant with the provisions of the law.

Indicator I.P.A.3.2.1 Recruitment procedures comply with the provisions of the law and are established and carried out transparently.

The IER states (p. 25) that the recruitment, habilitation and affiliation of doctoral supervisors are conducted transparently, fairly and in accordance with national legislation and institutional regulations. The review of the relevant documents—the [ULBS Habilitation Methodology](#), the [IOSUD Regulation](#) and the [SDT Regulation](#)—confirms that the main procedural stages are regulated. However, it also reveals several inconsistencies and areas in which the applicable rules are insufficiently coordinated or detailed.

The provisions of the [SDT Regulation](#) concerning the composition of the Doctoral School Council do not fully correspond to the minimum composition required by the general IOSUD Regulation. The allocation of decision-making authority is also unclear: Article 5 appears to assign the decision on granting or withdrawing membership to the Doctoral School, whereas Article 22 provides for a successive procedure involving the School Council, CSUD and the University Senate. In addition, the criteria used in affiliation decisions—including academic prestige, the relevance of publications and the opportunity of affiliation—are not supported by sufficiently explicit definitions, assessment criteria or documented evaluation instruments.

The regulations do not fully specify the manner in which recruitment needs are identified and communicated, the deadlines applicable to each institutional body, conflict-of-interest safeguards, the obligation to provide reasons for decisions or the available appeal procedure. Article 22 (6) also permits an adverse decision to be based on an ethics complaint that is still under examination. The requirement of written ecclesiastical endorsement is mentioned, but its scope, criteria, procedural effects and relationship with the university's academic decision-making responsibilities are not clearly explained. The [site visit](#) further indicated that access to updated regulations and the traceability of administrative decisions are not yet ensured consistently.

Analysis of the situation. The institution has established and applies the principal technical stages of habilitation and affiliation. Nevertheless, the regulatory framework remains fragmented, and certain inconsistencies reduce the predictability, transparency and auditability of recruitment decisions.

The contradiction concerning the composition and authority of the Doctoral School Council should be removed, and the qualitative criteria used in affiliation procedures should be operationalised through clear and published assessment criteria. The absence of explicit deadlines, conflict-of-interest provisions, reasoned decisions and appeal mechanisms further limits procedural transparency.

The possibility of rejecting an application solely on the basis of a pending ethics complaint raises concerns regarding procedural fairness, proportionality and the candidate's right to be heard. A distinction should therefore be made between final findings of misconduct and allegations that are still under examination.

Given the confessional character of theological education, the involvement of the competent ecclesiastical authority may constitute a legitimate element of the institutional framework. However, within a public university, the legal basis, scope and effects of the ecclesiastical endorsement should be clearly regulated, particularly in relation to academic assessment, affiliation and employment decisions, while respecting both the confessional identity of the field and the university's statutory responsibilities.

The July 2025 Habilitation Methodology should also be reviewed to ensure full alignment with the consolidated national framework following OM no. 3537/2025. The general one-year restriction on submitting a new application should be reconsidered, particularly where the initial rejection resulted from remediable administrative deficiencies. The additional SDT standards should likewise clarify the terminology used concerning participation in research grants.

Recommendations: Harmonise the SDT and IOSUD regulations and clarify the composition and authority of the Doctoral School Council. Introduce transparent affiliation criteria, deadlines, conflict-of-interest safeguards, reasoned decisions and an appeal mechanism; clarify the treatment of pending ethics complaints and the role of ecclesiastical endorsement. Update the Habilitation Methodology in line with the current national framework.

The indicator is: partially 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.
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SDT effectively utilizes a variety of digital tools to support its academic and administrative workflows, including management software, online feedback collection forms distributed via [Google Classroom](#), and specialized thesis similarity-check platforms such as [sistemantiplagiat.ro](#). Evaluation meetings confirmed that digital data collection is fully operational, and students are increasingly adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for translation, text correction, and documentation purposes.

Analysis of the situation: The provided documentation and interviews demonstrate that relevant digital solutions are securely embedded within the department's regular procedures, successfully enhancing information transparency, process efficiency, and overall service quality for the academic community. All core requirements described under this performance indicator are completely realized.

Recommendations: Update the academic-integrity framework to regulate transparency, authorship and responsible use of artificial intelligence in doctoral research and to align plagiarism-prevention provisions with the current legislation.

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.
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As stated in the IER (p. 26-27), the Theology doctoral curriculum features a 30-ECTS advanced coursework component and a 210-ECTS individual research program. The advanced component includes a mandatory 10-ECTS course combining modern Orthodox theology and classical languages, alongside a 10-ECTS elective chosen from two highly aggregated packages (historical-practical or biblical-systematic). Review of the attached cotutelle agreements and [site-visit minutes](#) reveals that this layout leaves two-thirds of the advanced training identical for all candidates, limiting custom adaptation even for highly specific or interdisciplinary research topics (e.g., candidates researching Indian art metaphysics).

Analysis of the situation. Structurally, the curriculum encompasses the total learning, teaching, research, and assessment experiences necessary to sum up to 240 ECTS and yield a Level 8 CNC qualification. However, the advanced training framework exhibits a lack of internal differentiation for a field encompassing highly distinct sub-disciplines. Greater curricular flexibility would enhance the programme's capacity to respond to highly specialised and interdisciplinary doctoral topics.

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).
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The IER (pp. 28–29) lists professional and transversal competences. Most of the professional competences reproduce the generic doctoral competences established by the [Framework Regulation](#), supplemented by several occupation-specific pastoral and religious competences. The transversal competence list includes communication, foreign-language, digital, teamwork, critical-thinking, intellectual-property and innovation-related competences, but omits the competences concerning the management of human, material and financial resources, career management and job creation, and the management of risk, crisis and failure. Some pastoral and social-counselling competences are also included among the transversal competences.

Although the IER states that all these competences correspond to EQF/CNC level 8, it does not formulate them systematically as assessable learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy. Nor does it provide a traceable mapping between the learning outcomes, the advanced training curriculum, the individual research programme, assessment methods and the targeted occupations.

Analysis of the situation. The IER correctly identifies the doctoral qualification as corresponding to EQF/CNC level 8 and reproduces most of the generic professional competences required by the national Framework Regulation. It also demonstrates that the doctoral field is relevant to ecclesial, academic and pastoral contexts. Nevertheless, full compliance is not demonstrated. The occupational mapping remains at the level of broad ISCO-08 groups rather than specific ESCO occupation profiles and their associated knowledge and skills. The transversal competence framework is incomplete in relation to the Framework Regulation and mixes generic doctoral competences with occupation-specific pastoral competences. The competences are not reformulated as measurable learning outcomes that explicitly reflect the defining features of EQF level 8, particularly frontier knowledge, advanced synthesis and evaluation, original contribution, innovation, scholarly autonomy, authority and responsibility. Finally, the documentation does not demonstrate how each expected outcome is developed

and assessed through the curriculum and the individual doctoral research programme. These deficiencies concern essential elements of the indicator but can be remedied within one year.

Recommendations: Reformulate programme- and course-level learning outcomes at EQF/NQF level 8, complete the transversal competences, map them to the relevant ESCO profiles, and demonstrate how the curriculum, research activities and assessment methods develop and verify each expected outcome.

The indicator is: partially fulfilled.

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

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.
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The IER (p. 30) highlights that student-centered learning is integrated into the [curriculum](#) via [tailored research plans](#) and institutional support measures. [Site visit interviews](#) confirmed that while the first-year advanced training programme (PPSA) features a fixed, standard course structure, doctoral students have the autonomous freedom to select specific topics for assignments, papers, and presentations within those courses. However, during the evaluation meetings, the panel noted a distinct need for a clearer correlation between these PPSA courses, the instructors' academic profiles, and the targeted competencies, particularly regarding general or interdisciplinary subjects.

Analysis of the situation. Despite the structural rigidity of the initial coursework curriculum, student-centered learning principles are effectively maintained through the personalized flexibility allowed within individual course tasks and the completely customized individual research paths supervised by the guidance committees.

Examples of good practice. The annual organization of the National Congress of Doctoral Students in Theology and the publication of the dedicated student journal [Studia Doctoralia Andreiana](#) provide excellent, active platforms for students to independently shape and disseminate their research. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Indicator I.P.B.3.1.2	The organisational component ensures opportunities for students to participate in academic mobility programmes organised in person and/or virtually.
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The IER (p. 31) presents a detailed record of seven doctoral students who participated in international academic mobility programmes between 2022 and 2025 in partner states such as Israel, Ukraine, Italy, and Croatia. [Provided documentation](#) confirms active international research grants, including a *Brot für die Welt* scholarship at Kiel University, and active participation in international summer schools like *Pro Oriente* in Vienna. Furthermore, a [joint international supervision agreement](#) ('cotutelă') was signed with the University of Erfurt in June 2025. [Evaluation minutes](#) indicate that both SACCIM and the doctoral school management systematically process and endorse all submitted mobility requests.

Analysis of the situation. The field of study demonstrates a functioning institutional framework and concrete evidence of doctoral students successfully accessing physical and virtual mobility options. Although the 2025 internal survey indicates that students feel highly familiar with graduation criteria, it highlights a relatively lower familiarity regarding mobility funding. To address this, the management strategically promotes short-term mobilities, which successfully accommodate the professional constraints of doctoral students who simultaneously manage pastoral parish duties.

Examples of good practice: Implementing a flexible short-term mobility policy directly tailored to the unique professional background of theology doctoral students (many of whom are active parish priests) ensures research advancement without disrupting community duties. The establishment of prestigious cross-border joint-supervision agreements expands international academic integration. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Standard S.B.3.2. Fairness. The organisational component provides fair opportunities for students.

Indicator I.P.B.3.2.1	The organisational component provides fair opportunities for students, in line with their potential and aspirations, taking into account the diversity of learning styles and abilities
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The SDT actively promotes equity and inclusion through the institutional framework of the [ULBS Charter](#) and the [SmartHub Center](#). Implementation is backed by concrete data: the university internally funded 16 institutional scholarships to support doctoral students who lacked state-budgeted slots (IER, p. 30). Furthermore, a doctoral student with physical disabilities successfully graduated in July 2024 after [defending a thesis](#) specifically focused on community inclusion. [Evaluation minutes](#) confirm that guidance committees dynamically adapt the research process to individual student needs through tailored counseling, timeline adjustments, and personalized workload restructuring.

Analysis of the situation. The field demonstrates a solid commitment to student-centered learning and equitable access by matching strategic regulations with tangible financial, pedagogical, and logistical support. While these inclusive mechanisms are fully operational, the system would benefit from a more rigorous formalization regarding how student feedback explicitly modifies equity policies over time.

Examples of good practice. The allocation of internally funded university scholarships serves as an excellent equity mechanism to counteract limited state-budgeted slots, ensuring that vulnerable or high-potential researchers are not excluded due to economic constraints. **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.
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The IER (pp. 32–33) states that ULBS ensures physical and digital accessibility through institutional inclusion policies and the [SmartHub centre](#) and provides access to academic databases, including through [ANELIS](#). The successful completion and public [defence of a doctoral thesis](#) by a student with disabilities in July 2024 provides relevant evidence of practical inclusion. However, [discussions](#) during the evaluation visit revealed convergent concerns among current doctoral students and graduates regarding limited access to recent international theological monographs and other specialized literature required for advanced research. Although access to general electronic databases is available, the evidence provided does not fully demonstrate that the documentary resources are sufficiently tailored to the range of doctoral research topics in Theology.

Analysis of the situation. The institutional framework ensures basic physical accessibility, general support services and access to electronic resources. Some limitations concerning access to recent international scholarship indicate that the existing provision could be better adapted to doctoral research needs. Training in the effective use of specialized databases would also be beneficial, particularly where individual needs are identified.

Recommendations: Improve access to recent international theological literature through acquisitions, electronic resources, interlibrary loan and institutional partnerships. **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.
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According to the IER (p. 33-35), learning outcomes in the Theology doctoral programme are defined in accordance with Level 8 NQF requirements and communicated through [course descriptions](#) and [curricula](#).

However, site visit discussions revealed that learning outcomes are not sufficiently operationalized. The expert panel identified an insufficient correlation between certain courses in the advanced training programme, the academic profile of their holders, and the targeted competencies.

Analysis of the situation: The course descriptions generally formulate learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy and provide sufficient information on course content and assessment. However, the level of specificity and consistency varies across courses. In some general or interdisciplinary subjects, the relationship between course content, assessment methods and the competences expected at NQF Level 8 could be made more explicit. These aspects do not prevent doctoral students and teaching staff from understanding the principal course expectations, but greater standardisation would improve transparency and coherence.

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.
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According to the IER (pp. 33–35), the expected learning outcomes of the Theology doctoral programme are presented in the [curriculum](#) and further specified in the [course descriptions](#). They are formulated with reference to knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy and communicate the principal expectations concerning the content and objectives of the advanced training courses. The course descriptions also provide information on course content, teaching and learning activities, assessment methods and the competences envisaged.

Analysis of the situation: The programme documentation describes the expected learning outcomes and enables doctoral students and teaching staff to understand the main academic expectations and content of the courses included in the advanced training programme. Although the degree of specificity and operationalisation is not fully uniform across all course descriptions, the learning outcomes are sufficiently identifiable and connected to the educational content for the essential requirement of the indicator to be met. Further clarification and standardisation would improve consistency, particularly regarding the formulation of measurable outcomes and their relationship with teaching and assessment activities. The broader alignment of programme-level learning outcomes with EQF/NQF level 8 and the targeted competences is assessed under Indicator I.P.B.2.1.2. The indicator is: fulfilled.

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

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.

ULBS applies an annually approved [regulation for admission](#) to doctoral studies. The procedure covers the publication of vacant doctoral positions, supervisors, research topics and forms of funding; online registration and verification of application files; the language competence examination; the specialist examination and assessment of the doctoral research proposal; publication of preliminary and final results; confirmation of places; and enrolment. For the 2025 admission session, the regulation was approved by Senate Decision no. 669/30.01.2025, and the calendar, available positions, research topics, assessment criteria and results were published on the [website](#). Theology candidates underwent a written examination in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology and an interview based on their research proposal.

Analysis of the situation: The admission procedure is operational, substantially documented and publicly accessible. The content, assessment criteria and minimum passing grade are defined, and the successive administrative stages are traceable. However, the regulation limits appeal to procedural defects, although admission in Theology also includes a written examination. Moreover, the outcome of the appeal procedure is communicated individually by e-mail, while the national framework requires the result of that procedure to be displayed. The general anti-discrimination methodology provides an additional route for complaints concerning discriminatory conduct, but it does not replace an effective academic appeal mechanism for the written admission examination.

Recommendations: Introduce an effective appeal mechanism for the assessment of written admission examinations and publish appeal outcomes in compliance with personal-data requirements.

The indicator is: partially 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.
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At the institutional level, ULBS has adopted an [anti-discrimination methodology](#) that expressly applies to admission procedures. The methodology prohibits discrimination on grounds including religion or belief, disability, ethnicity and social status, and provides both informal and formal mechanisms for addressing complaints through the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office and the University Ethics Committee. In addition, the [Career Counselling and Guidance Office](#) offers educational and vocational support to students, graduates and persons interested in enrolling at ULBS, including support for persons with disabilities, special educational needs or disadvantaged backgrounds. Admission to doctoral studies in Orthodox Theology is subject to specific confessional eligibility conditions (Annex 7 to the [admission regulation](#)). These include holding both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Theology, obtaining the written endorsement of the competent diocesan bishop and, in the case of candidates belonging to other Orthodox Churches or Christian denominations, obtaining additional ecclesiastical approvals. The institutional documentation relates these requirements to [Holy Synod Decisions nos. 6342 and 6343/1998](#). Decision no. 6342/1998 approved access to doctoral studies in Theology for persons who had previously studied Theology, subject to compliance with the applicable legislation. Decision no. 6343/1998 entrusted the assessment of applications from candidates belonging to other denominations to the competent local ecclesiastical authority, in consultation with the relevant Orthodox faculty. Article 33 of the [2024 Church-State Protocol](#) also provides that admission to doctoral studies in Orthodox Theology is organised in accordance with the legislation in force and with the specific conditions established by the Holy Synod.

ULBS has adopted an anti-discrimination methodology applicable to admission, which prohibits discrimination on grounds including religion or belief, disability, ethnicity and social status and provides mechanisms for counselling, complaint and redress. The Career Counselling and Guidance Office offers support to candidates, including persons with disabilities, special educational needs or disadvantaged backgrounds. Admission to doctoral studies in Orthodox Theology also involves confessional eligibility conditions, including prior theological studies and ecclesiastical endorsement, based on the applicable Church regulations and the 2024 Church-State Protocol.

Analysis of the situation: The institutional framework provides relevant safeguards for fairness, equal opportunities and support for candidates at risk of exclusion. The confessional requirements reflect the specific nature of Orthodox theological education and are supported by the existing Church-State regulatory framework. No evidence was identified that these conditions were applied arbitrarily or discriminatorily. Nevertheless, greater normative clarity is needed concerning their relationship with the general national admission methodology, particularly the rule that admission may not be conditioned by the field of prior studies. This is a systemic issue requiring clarification by the competent national and ecclesiastical authorities rather than evidence of non-compliance attributable to the Doctoral School. Procedural information concerning ecclesiastical endorsements and reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities could also be presented more explicitly.

Recommendations: Publish clear and up-to-date information on the applicable ecclesiastical endorsement procedures and on reasonable adjustments available to candidates with disabilities or special educational needs.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

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

The Doctoral School applies an institutional framework comprising the [IOSUD doctoral regulation](#), the [thesis-completion procedure](#), [doctoral contracts](#) and a four-year, 240-ECTS [curriculum](#). Implementation is confirmed by the 2025–2026 timetable, public pre-defence announcements and the academic records and research-report documentation examined on site.

Analysis of the situation: The academic pathway is operational and documented. However, the central IOSUD documents are not fully harmonised internally or with the consolidated national framework. The doctoral contract may present an unfavourable monthly activity report as a sufficient ground for dismissal, although the IOSUD regulation requires a reasoned proposal and approvals by the competent bodies. It also incorrectly associates termination of the contract and a second unsuccessful thesis assessment with the pre-defence stage and the guidance committee. The thesis-completion rules retain provisions concerning grades and replacement of the committee that require alignment with the updated [Ministerial Order no. 3020/2024](#).

Recommendations: Align the doctoral regulation, study contract and thesis-completion procedure with the current national framework, particularly regarding dismissal safeguards, pre-defence and public defence, termination of doctoral status, second defence and statutory leave. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Criterion B.8. Internationalisation process

Standard S.B.8.1. Internationalisation. Improving the quality of education and research through internationalisation actions.

Indicator I.P.B.8.1.1	The organisational component carries out international cooperation actions supporting mobility of the members of its own community and collaboration in academic and research activities.
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ULBS and SDT actively foster an internationalized academic environment. The institution coordinates international joint doctoral programs, exemplified by a recent [co-supervision agreement](#) signed in June 2025 with the University of Erfurt (Germany). Doctoral students regularly secure [external research grants and scholarships](#)—such as the Brot für die Welt foundation grant and Catholic Bishops' Conference of Germany grants—enabling extensive research stays at foreign universities like Kiel and Paderborn. Furthermore, multiple students actively participate in international practical and study mobility programs via Erasmus+ (e.g., Kapodistria University of Athens, and parishes in Greece and Italy). The school regularly hosts high-profile international symposia, colloquiums, and online conferences in collaboration with foreign institutions like the Ostkirchliches Institut Regensburg and the [University of Bern](#). Additionally, institutional integration into the [European FORTHM Alliance](#) since 2021 provides structured virtual and physical mobility networks, mentoring programs, and career workshops.

Analysis of the situation: The SDT comprehensively complies with internationalization requirements. It demonstrates robust, continuous execution of international cooperation agreements, multiple successful joint doctoral agreements ('cotutela'), financial and structural support for outgoing student mobilities, and a high volume of cross-border academic events. Evidence in the report and the annexes confirms that these actions have directly elevated the research capacity of the doctoral community.

Examples of Good Practice: The explicit operationalization of joint doctoral agreements ('cotutela') with prestigious European universities (such as the University of Erfurt) and the active, high-volume involvement of theological doctoral students in the specialized tracks, masterclasses, and annual Grand Prix competitions of the FORTHM European Alliance serve as excellent examples of deep institutional internationalization.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Criterion B.9. Scientific research results

Standard S.B.9.1 Scientific research in the education process. Scientific research activities support students in achieving the learning outcomes.

Indicator I.P.B.9.1.1	Learning based on scientific investigation and research results support and are capitalised upon in achieving the learning outcomes envisaged through the study programme.
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[Inquiry-based learning](#) is embedded in the Theology doctoral programme through the individual research project, periodic research reports, [conference participation](#), publications and the doctoral thesis (IER, p. 41). The Research Methodology course includes critical analysis of scientific articles, peer-review simulation, individual research design and a research portfolio. Other [course descriptions](#) include learning outcomes related to critical literature review, identification of research gaps, formulation of hypotheses and academic communication of research results. Doctoral students also benefit from interaction with the research activities and current scholarly work of their supervisors.

Analysis of the situation: The evidence demonstrates that scientific investigation constitutes a central component of doctoral education and directly supports the achievement of the expected learning outcomes. Doctoral students progressively develop and demonstrate advanced research competences through their individual projects, research reports, publications, academic presentations and theses. Research results are also used through literature analysis, methodological activities and interaction with supervisors' scholarly work. Although the integration of current research results is not documented with the same degree of specificity in every course description, this does not undermine the functioning of inquiry-based learning across the doctoral programme. Greater consistency in recording the relationship between current research, teaching activities, assessment and learning outcomes would nevertheless improve transparency and traceability.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

Standard S.B.9.2. Scientific research pertaining to the objectives of the study programme. The organisational component carries out scientific research activities aligned with the objectives of the evaluated study programme.

Indicator I.P.B.9.2.1	The results of scientific research are visible at national and international level in that scientific domain, and capitalised upon in an adequate manner.
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The [2022](#), [2023](#) and [2024](#) GRADIS records document indexed articles, books and chapters published by international publishers, citations in WoS/Scopus publications and international volumes, BDI publications, editorial and peer-review roles, and participation in national and international conferences. Most doctoral supervisors are represented in these records. The IER (p. 42) also provides examples of doctoral-student publications and documents a UEFISCDI PCE project led by a Theology doctoral supervisor and involving a doctoral student as research assistant.

Analysis of the situation: The evidence demonstrates a substantial body of research relevant to Theology and visible both nationally and internationally. Indexed publications, international books and chapters, citations, conference participation, editorial activity and a competitively funded project confirm that the visibility claimed in the SER is real. The principal weakness concerns the segmentation, consistency and longitudinal presentation of the evidence rather than the existence or visibility of the research results themselves.

Best practice examples: The involvement of a doctoral student as research assistant in a competitively funded UEFISCDI project is a valuable example of integrating doctoral training into institutional research.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

DOMAIN C. Quality management

C.1. Quality assurance strategies and procedures, including in the field of academic ethics and conduct, which involve students, employers and other stakeholders and are applied in a consistent, transparent manner

Standard S.C.1.1. Application. Adequately implemented strategic directions, actions, and procedures

Indicator I.P.C.1.1.1	The organisational component consistently carries out actions and applies procedures, proving their impact on improving the quality of education at the level of the study programme
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Following the external evaluation, IOSUD-ULBS adopted a [multiannual improvement plan](#) and subsequently [reported](#) the implementation status of the corresponding measures. Verifiable changes relevant to Theology include the establishment of a distinct Doctoral School of Theology, the transition to a four-year and 240-ECTS

curriculum, the annual verification of doctoral supervisors against habilitation standards, the implementation of doctoral mobility funding, and the systematic use of similarity checking. [Annual operational plans](#) assign responsibilities, deadlines and deliverables for several IOSUD quality actions.

Analysis of the situation: The evidence demonstrates that quality-assurance actions are implemented repeatedly and that several recommendations have led to concrete organisational, curricular and procedural changes. However, the impact of these measures on doctoral progression, completion, learning outcomes, satisfaction and research performance could be better documented. The quality cycle is operational and documented for the Theology doctoral programme.

Best practice examples: The annual SCEAC report presents external recommendations, corresponding institutional measures and differentiated implementation rates, including measures. The multiannual follow-up of external recommendations and the transparent recognition that doctoral dropout remains problematic represent useful elements of an improvement-oriented quality culture.

Recommendations: Develop an integrated programme-level monitoring framework for the Theology doctoral field, using field-disaggregated and cohort-based data and linking identified issues, corresponding decisions, corrective measures, implementation evidence and measurable follow-up results. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Standard S.C.1.2. Stakeholder engagement. The HEI proves that it engages the stakeholders who have relevant activity in applying the procedures.

Indicator I.P.C.1.2.1	The opinions of the members of its own community and of other stakeholders are taken into account in the procedure implementation process.
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Doctoral students are represented in [CSUD](#), doctoral-school governance structures and [SCEAC](#). ULBS also collects their views through periodic questionnaires and direct consultation. In 2025, a [detailed survey](#) of 154 doctoral students, including 12 from Theology, examined research-training needs, access to resources, funding, professional development and mentoring. The results identified concrete needs and preferences relevant to the implementation and further development of doctoral-support procedures. The [CEAC/SCEAC Regulation](#) also provides for student and employer representation and consultation of external partners.

Analysis of the situation: ULBS has functioning and complementary mechanisms for collecting and considering stakeholder opinions, including formal representation in governance and quality-assurance structures, surveys and direct consultation. The 2025 survey generated detailed, actionable information that can inform the implementation of mentoring, research support, funding and professional-development measures. Together with student participation in the relevant institutional bodies, this demonstrates that members of the academic community have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the implementation of procedures. Although the institutional response to each consultation is not always documented separately and the results are not consistently disaggregated by doctoral field, these limitations concern the traceability and refinement of an otherwise functioning mechanism. The essential requirement of the indicator is therefore met.

Best practice examples: The 2025 doctoral-student survey goes beyond general satisfaction and identifies specific needs concerning research training, funding, networking, career development and mentoring. It also records preferences regarding the frequency, structure and feedback arrangements of a possible mentoring programme, providing a useful basis for designing targeted support. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Criterion C.2. Functionality of education quality assurance structures, including in the field of academic ethics and conduct, according to the law

Standard S.C.2.2. Operation. Quality assurance and academic ethics and conduct organisational structures adequately perform their specific role and functions.

Indicator I.P.C.2.2.2.	The academic ethics commission operates based on the regulation approved by the University Senate, and performs actions that are compliant with the law, independently from any other structure or person in the higher education institution.
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ULBS has a Senate-approved [Regulation governing the University Ethics Committee](#) and the Research Ethics Subcommittee. The Regulation provides for a four-year mandate, institutional independence, student representation, incompatibilities with senior management positions, confidentiality, hearings, evidence gathering, reasoned decisions, conflict-of-interest rules, recusal and replacement of members, and appeals to the competent national bodies. [Annual reports](#) demonstrate sustained activity, including the examination of complaints involving doctoral students, hearings, documentary assessment, sanctions and institutional recommendations. In 2024, 18 ethics files were registered and 14 were resolved; the Research Ethics Subcommittee examined 32 applications and issued 30 favourable and one unfavourable opinion. Decisions nos. 7–9/2026 provide recent evidence of actual functioning, application of recusal and substitute-member mechanisms, reasoned decision-making and the application of a sanction.

Analysis of the situation: The evidence demonstrates that the Committee operates continuously, examines complaints, administers evidence, applies conflict-of-interest safeguards, adopts reasoned decisions and, where appropriate, imposes sanctions. No evidence was identified that the Rectorate, Senate or another university structure altered the merits of a decision. The existing procedural safeguards are broadly aligned with the national framework. The short filing deadline and the insufficiently detailed grounds for member revocation constitute procedural vulnerabilities requiring legal review and clearer safeguards, but the available evidence does not demonstrate actual interference or systemic non-compliance sufficient to invalidate the indicator.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

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.
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ULBS has an institutional quality-assurance framework comprising [CEAC](#), the IOSUD Quality Evaluation and Assurance Subcommittee and the [Quality Assurance Service](#). The applicable regulations provide for internal evaluation, periodic reporting, recommendations, improvement plans and monitoring of implementation. The 2024 [SCEAC report](#) confirms that the Theology doctoral field was included in the periodic progress-reporting exercise and presents a structured follow-up plan linking recommendations, measures and implementation levels. Documented results include revision of doctoral curricula following the extension of doctoral studies to four years, specification of learning outcomes and credits, annual evaluation of doctoral supervisors, election of doctoral-student representatives, and measures concerning similarity checking, research infrastructure, mobility and financial support.

Analysis of the situation: The evidence demonstrates that ULBS consistently applies its procedures for monitoring and periodically reviewing doctoral education and that the Theology field is included in these processes. Progress reports, improvement plans and implementation monitoring show that identified issues and external recommendations are translated into institutional and curricular measures. The structured follow-up mechanism and the documented changes confirm that the procedures have a practical effect on quality assurance. Although the relationship between particular findings, decisions and measurable outcomes could be documented more consistently at the level of the Theology doctoral field, this limitation does not undermine the systematic application or demonstrated effects of the existing procedures. The broader measurement of impact on progression, completion, research performance and satisfaction is addressed under Indicator I.P.C.1.1.1.

Best practice examples: The SCEAC report uses a structured recommendation–measure–implementation table and publicly reports implementation levels. The inclusion of all doctoral fields evaluated by ARACIS in 2021 demonstrates comprehensive institutional follow-up. The annual verification of doctoral supervisors' compliance

with the applicable standards, linked to eligibility to admit new doctoral students, represents a particularly relevant quality-control mechanism.. **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.
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Doctoral supervisors participate in [CSUD](#), doctoral-school councils, [SCEAC](#) and the academic structures responsible for doctoral training and evaluation. The SDT is represented in CSUD, while its council includes a doctoral-student representative and an external academic member. Three doctoral students sit on CSUD, and the IOSUD improvement plan reports the election of doctoral-student representatives to doctoral-school councils as fully implemented. Doctoral students are also consulted through the IOSUD satisfaction and [mentoring-needs survey](#), which received 154 responses in 2025. External academics participate in guidance and [academic-integrity committees](#), [thesis-defence committees](#), invited [courses](#), [conferences](#) and international cooperation activities. The CEAC/SCEAC Regulation provides for the participation of students and employers and requires monitoring of external stakeholder involvement.

Analysis of the situation: Internal stakeholder participation is partly demonstrated through the involvement of doctoral supervisors, student representation in governance structures and the University-wide doctoral-student survey. The Theology field also benefits from substantial external academic participation. Nevertheless, the evidence demonstrates representation and academic cooperation more clearly than systematic stakeholder participation in the actual monitoring and review of the Theology doctoral field. Graduate, employer and broader beneficiary involvement remains insufficiently documented, and the link between stakeholder input and decisions is not traceable.

Recommendations: Establish a regular and documented consultation cycle for Theology doctoral students, graduates, employers and other beneficiaries, recording the issues raised, the institutional response, the measures adopted and the follow-up results; disaggregate relevant findings for the Theology field where confidentiality permits. **The indicator is: partially fulfilled.**

Criterion C.4. Procedures for the periodic evaluation of the quality of the activities of teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff, and administrative staff

Standard S.C.4.1. Procedures. Applying the methodologies and procedures contributes to improving the quality of the staff's activities.

Indicator I.P.C.4.1.1	The organisational component analyses the results of the students' biannual evaluation of teachers.
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ULBS and the SDT collect doctoral students' feedback regarding teaching staff and mentoring performance twice an academic year using [online questionnaires](#) via Google Forms distributed through a dedicated Classroom platform. The results are centralized by the [Quality Evaluation and Assurance Subcommittee](#) and integrated into [annual institutional reports](#). Interviews during the site visit clarified that this mechanism functions effectively on a semester basis to capture both initial expectations and subsequent student observations.

Analysis of the situation: A formal and fully operational mechanism for the biannual evaluation of academic staff exists and its inputs are institutionalized. While the initial self-evaluation notes a lack of documented tracking of outcomes, meetings with SACCIM and management verified that the quality loop is closed: management addresses issues directly with the supervisors concerned, and regulations explicitly allow for limiting the assignment of new doctoral students to a supervisor if mentoring deficiencies are identified.

Good practices: Utilizing a distinct, centralized digital Classroom platform specifically for doctoral students guarantees seamless communication, increased accessibility, and a highly systematic collection of quality feedback. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Criterion C.5. Systematically updated databases on internal quality assurance

Standard S.C.5.1. Databases. The HEI uses databases to support internal quality assurance activities.

Indicator I.P.C.5.1.1	The organisational component systematically collects and analyses data required for the internal quality assurance process.
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ULBS has institutional responsibilities for data collection, analysis and reporting through [CEAC](#), [SCEAC](#) and the [Quality Assurance Service](#). Successive [IOSUD activity reports](#), [CEAC/SCEAC reports](#), [Rector's reports](#), progress reports and the current self-evaluation report contain longitudinal and field-specific data. For Theology, the available documentation includes data on admissions, enrolment by year, doctoral supervisors and their supervisory loads, fulfilment of habilitation standards, theses and doctoral degrees, research activities, mobility and financial support. The 2024 IOSUD-SCEAC report analyses doctoral data by field, includes a SWOT analysis and monitors the implementation of quality recommendations. Doctoral-student satisfaction and mentoring needs are systematically surveyed and analysed; the 2025 survey contains 154 responses. GRADIS is used institutionally to systematise and monitor teaching and research performance. Annual monitoring of doctoral-supervisor standards is linked to the decision whether supervisors may admit new doctoral students.

Analysis of the situation: The continuity of annual reporting and the presence of comparable data demonstrate that collection is systematic rather than ad hoc. Data are not merely recorded: they are used for progress monitoring, SWOT analysis, evaluation of doctoral supervisors, identification of risks and follow-up of improvement measures. The system is fragmented across administrative records, reports, survey platforms and performance-monitoring instruments, and some important data are insufficiently disaggregated. Nevertheless, the essential requirement of systematic collection and analysis is met. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Criterion C.6. Transparency of information of public interest, including those regarding the study programmes and domains offered, and transparency regarding the related certificates, diplomas and qualifications

Standard S.C.6.1. Transparency. The organisational component ensures transparency of information, as required by the law.

Indicator I.P.C.6.1.1	The organisational component ensures publication and access to information of public interest regarding the evaluated study programme.
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ULBS maintains a publicly accessible [doctoral portal](#) covering [admission](#), doctoral fields and supervisors, curricula, regulations, pre-defences, theses, habilitation and CSUD activities. For the Theology doctoral field, the [Doctoral School Regulation](#), council composition, doctoral-student representative, current curriculum, course descriptions and timetable are publicly available. The admission section provides the applicable regulation, eligible supervisors, available places, calendar, required documents, fees and appeal arrangements. Thesis-completion procedures, templates and forms are published, while pre-defence and thesis information is regularly posted. IOSUD annual activity reports for 2021–2025 are also publicly accessible.

Analysis of the situation: ULBS ensures public access to the main academic, administrative and regulatory information concerning doctoral studies and the Theology doctoral field. The portal is functional and provides current information on admission, programme organisation, curricula, doctoral supervision and thesis completion. The essential requirement of publication and access to information of public interest is therefore met. Some pages and documents are insufficiently dated, inconsistently labelled or distributed across different sections, and a limited amount of outdated information remains accessible without clear archival identification. These shortcomings may reduce ease of navigation and certainty as to which version is current, but they do not substantially restrict public access to the information required by the indicator.

Recommendations: Consolidate and annually review the public profile of the Theology doctoral field, clearly distinguishing current from archived information, coordinating the language versions, and maintaining a complete register of Doctoral School decisions with relevant annexes and links to related CSUD and Senate acts. **The indicator is: fulfilled.**

Indicator I.P.C.6.1.2	The organisational component ensures transparent decision-making processes.
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ULBS maintains a publicly accessible archive of [CSUD decisions](#), organised by year and covering 2017–2026. Many decisions include annexes concerning admission, eligible supervisors, available places, doctoral status and IOSUD reports. The Senate website also provides an extensive chronological [register of decisions and approved regulations, procedures and reports](#). The Council of the Theology Doctoral School has published decisions concerning admission research topics and the 2025–2026 curriculum, while the latter also records that consultation was conducted electronically. The SCEAC report and its associated CSUD decision are publicly available, allowing recommendations, improvement measures and their approval to be traced.

Analysis of the situation: ULBS has established a substantial and functional framework for the transparency of decision-making at Senate and CSUD levels, complemented by the publication of decisions adopted by the Council of the Theology Doctoral School. The available records enable interested parties to identify the competent bodies, the matters decided and, in several cases, the related annexes and supporting documents. The publication of quality-assurance reports together with the corresponding approval decisions also permits the institutional follow-up of recommendations to be traced. The essential requirement of transparent decision-making is therefore met. Transparency at the level of the Theology Doctoral School could nevertheless be improved through more consistent numbering, publication of operative annexes and documentation of the main procedural elements underlying decisions.

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.
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The SDT demonstrates strict adherence to the legal obligations concerning external quality evaluation. The previous maintenance of accreditation was officially granted by the ARACIS Council on [September 30, 2021](#), for a standard five-year cycle. In perfect compliance with the legal timeframe prior to the expiration of this cycle, the university digitally signed and submitted its complete internal evaluation files on January 13, 2026. Subsequently, the external evaluation expert panel successfully conducted the on-site evaluation visit from June 17 to June 19, 2026. [Minutes of the meetings](#) document thorough institutional engagement across all management levels, the internal quality control service (SACCIM), and the IOSUD evaluation subcommission.

Analysis of the situation: The seamless alignment between the internal evaluation files and the field evaluation verified during the site visit confirms that the institutional components effectively and consistently carry out all mandatory external quality control workflows under the current legal framework.

The indicator is: fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
Long-standing academic tradition and a clearly defined theological and ecclesial profile. • Adequate number of qualified doctoral supervisors, meeting the applicable national habilitation standards. • Effective doctoral guidance and academic-integrity committees, with regular monitoring of doctoral progress. • Strong connection between doctoral research, ecclesial life and the professional needs of graduates. • Functioning mechanisms for student representation, feedback, mentoring and individualized academic support. • Concrete institutional support for inclusion, research mobility, scholarships and participation in international	Incomplete formulation and operationalization of learning outcomes at EQF/NQF level 8 and insufficient correlation with ESCO profiles, curriculum and assessment. • Limited access to recent international theological monographs and other specialized resources required for advanced doctoral research. • Regulatory inconsistencies and insufficient procedural safeguards in the recruitment and affiliation of doctoral supervisors. • Incomplete appeal arrangements for the assessment of the written doctoral admission examination. • Insufficient programme-level evidence concerning the measurable impact of quality-assurance actions. • Limited systematic involvement

academic activities. • Active international cooperation, including Erasmus+ mobility, research stays, cotutelle agreements and participation in the FORTHEM Alliance. • Visible research output and an active academic environment supported by conferences, publications and international cooperation. • Operational quality-assurance and academic-ethics structures, including monitoring of improvement measures and systematic similarity checking.	of graduates, employers and other external beneficiaries in the monitoring and periodic review of the doctoral field. • Fragmentation and uneven updating of public information and incomplete traceability of Theology Doctoral School decisions. • Insufficiently documented integration of doctoral students into the activities and research projects of the research centres.
Opportunities: Expansion of international partnerships, cotutelle arrangements and joint research projects through Erasmus+, FORTHEM and existing academic networks. • Access to European, national, ecclesiastical and private funding for doctoral mobility, research projects and specialized library resources. • Development of interlibrary cooperation and institutional access to international theological databases and electronic publications. • Strong relationships with ecclesiastical, educational, cultural and social institutions that can support research relevance, stakeholder consultation and graduate employment. • Increased use of digital research tools and responsibly regulated artificial intelligence in documentation, textual analysis and academic writing. • Development of interdisciplinary and modular doctoral training in cooperation with other doctoral schools and research centres.	Threats: Increasing costs of international publications, database subscriptions, research mobility and participation in international academic events. • Frequent changes and insufficient coordination of national regulations governing doctoral education, habilitation and admission. • Potential tensions or legal uncertainty arising from the interaction between national academic regulations and ecclesiastical requirements specific to confessional theological education. • Heavy teaching, administrative and research workloads that may reduce the time available for supervision and advanced research. • Competition for research funding and the growing pressure to achieve greater international visibility in highly selective publication environments. • Possible decline in the pool of suitably prepared doctoral candidates and limited availability of publicly funded doctoral places.

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	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
3.	I.P.A.2.1.1 The HEI legally owns venues for the related education, research and administrative processes, as well as for services for students, doctoral students and trainees, thus providing an enabling environment for living and studying, including for disabled persons. Optimal venues are also provided for activities of the staff. Such venues are adequately equipped.	F	
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.3.1.2 The HEI ensures professional and personal development for its staff.	F	
7.	I.P.A.3.2.1 Recruitment procedures comply with the provisions of the law, and are established and carried out transparently.	PF	Harmonise the SDT and IOSUD regulations and clarify the composition and authority of the Doctoral School Council. Introduce transparent affiliation criteria, deadlines, conflict-of-interest safeguards, reasoned decisions and an appeal mechanism; clarify the treatment of pending ethics complaints and the role of ecclesiastical endorsement. Update the Habilitation Methodology in line with the current national framework.
8.	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	Update the academic-integrity framework to regulate transparency, authorship and responsible use of artificial intelligence in doctoral research and to align plagiarism-prevention provisions with the current legislation.
DOMAIN B. Educational efficacy			
9.	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,	F	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
	teaching, practical training, research and evaluation experiences, which, together, lead to a higher education qualification.		
10.	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).	PF	Reformulate programme- and course-level learning outcomes at EQF/NQF level 8, complete the transversal competences, map them to the relevant ESCO profiles, and demonstrate how the curriculum, research activities and assessment methods develop and verify each expected outcome.
11.	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	
12.	I.P.B.3.1.2 The organisational component ensures opportunities for students to participate in academic mobility programmes organised in person and/or virtually.	F	
13.	I.P.B.3.2.1 The organisational component provides fair opportunities for students, in line with their potential and aspirations, taking into account the diversity of learning styles and abilities.	F	
14.	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	Improve access to recent international theological literature through acquisitions, electronic resources, interlibrary loan and institutional partnerships.
15.	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	
16.	I.P.B.5.1.2 Achievement of the learning outcomes is checked in ongoing examinations and study completion exams.	F	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
17.	I.P.B.7.1.1 The organisational component applies the admission procedures.	PF	Introduce an effective appeal mechanism for the assessment of written admission examinations and publish appeal outcomes in compliance with personal-data requirements.
18.	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	Publish clear and up-to-date information on the applicable ecclesiastical endorsement procedures and on reasonable adjustments available to candidates with disabilities or special educational needs.
19.	I.P.B.7.2.1 The organisational component applies the regulations concerning the students' professional activity.	F	Align the doctoral regulation, study contract and thesis-completion procedure with the current national framework, particularly regarding dismissal safeguards, pre-defence and public defence, termination of doctoral status, second defence and statutory leave.
20.	I.P.B.8.1.1 The organisational component carries out international cooperation actions supporting mobility of the members of its own community and collaboration in academic and research activities.	F	
21.	I.P.B.9.1.1 Learning based on scientific investigation and research results support and are capitalised upon in achieving the learning outcomes envisaged through the study programme.	F	
22.	I.P.B.9.2.1 The results of scientific research are visible at national and international level in that scientific domain, and capitalised upon in an adequate manner.	F	
DOMAIN C. Quality management			
23.	I.P.C.1.1.1 The organisational component consistently applies the procedures, and proves their impact on quality assurance.	F	Develop an integrated programme-level monitoring framework for the Theology doctoral field, using field-disaggregated and cohort-based data and linking identified issues, corresponding decisions, corrective measures, implementation evidence and measurable follow-up results.

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
24.	I.P.C.1.2.1 The opinions of the members of its own community and of other stakeholders are taken into account in the procedure implementation process.	F	
25.	I.P.C.2.2.2. The academic ethics commission operates based on the regulation approved by the University Senate, and performs actions that are compliant with the law, independently from any other structure or person in the higher education institution.	F	
26.	I.P.C.3.1.1 The organisational component consistently applies the procedures, and proves their impact on quality assurance.	F	
27.	I.P.C.3.1.2 Members of its own community and other stakeholders are involved in the procedure implementation process.	PF	Establish a regular and documented consultation cycle for Theology doctoral students, graduates, employers and other beneficiaries, recording the issues raised, the institutional response, the measures adopted and the follow-up results; disaggregate relevant findings for the Theology field where confidentiality permits.
28.	I.P.C.4.1.1 The organisational component analyses the results of the students' biannual evaluation of teachers.	F	
29.	I.P.C.5.1.1 The organisational component systematically collects and analyses data required for the internal quality assurance process.	F	
30.	I.P.C.6.1.1 The organisational component ensures publication and access to information of public interest regarding the evaluated study programme.	F	Consolidate and annually review the public profile of the Theology doctoral field, clearly distinguishing current from archived information, coordinating the language versions, and maintaining a complete register of Doctoral School decisions with relevant annexes and links to related CSUD and Senate acts.
31.	I.P.C.6.1.2 The organisational component ensures transparent decision-making processes.	F	

No.	Performance Indicator	Extent to which it was fulfilled (F/PF/UF)	Recommendations
32.	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	1	—
Domain B. Educational efficacy	12	2	—
Domain C. Quality management	9	1	—
Total	28	4	—

VI. Conclusions

The evaluation confirmed that the doctoral study domain of Theology at ULBS has a long-standing academic tradition, a clearly defined theological profile and adequate institutional, human and material capacity. The doctoral programme is supported by qualified supervisors, functioning guidance and academic-integrity structures, regular monitoring of doctoral progress and meaningful connections with ecclesial, academic and social contexts. The panel also noted effective support for international mobility and cooperation, doctoral-student participation in research and academic events, inclusive educational practices and an operational institutional quality-assurance framework.

At the same time, several aspects require focused improvement. The regulatory framework for the recruitment and affiliation of doctoral supervisors should be harmonised and supplemented with clearer procedural safeguards. Expected learning outcomes should be formulated more consistently at EQF/NQF level 8 and correlated with the relevant occupational profiles, curriculum and assessment. Access to recent international theological literature should be strengthened, while the admission procedure should provide an effective appeal mechanism for written examinations. At quality-management level, ULBS should demonstrate more systematically the programme-level impact of improvement measures and ensure regular, documented involvement of graduates, employers and other beneficiaries in monitoring and reviewing the doctoral field.

Overall, the panel considers that the Theology doctoral field provides education and research of good quality within a stable and supportive academic environment. The identified shortcomings do not call into question the programme's overall capacity to achieve its mission, but require targeted follow-up and documented implementation of the recommendations within the established timeframe.

Proposed decision

Based on the Internal Evaluation Report and its annexes, the documents examined, the information published by the institution, the observations made during the site visit and the discussions held with the relevant stakeholders, the external evaluation panel concludes that the applicable standards for the doctoral study domain of Theology, organised by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, are fulfilled.

Of the 32 performance indicators assessed, 28 were evaluated as fulfilled, 4 as partially fulfilled and none as unfulfilled. The partially fulfilled indicators do not exceed the thresholds established by Article 63(3)(b) and (c) of the Methodology approved by Government Decision no. 962/2024, either overall or within any individual evaluation domain.

The external evaluation panel therefore proposes: **MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION (MAC)** for the doctoral study domain of Theology, organised by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu.

The institution is expected to implement the recommendations formulated in this report, particularly those corresponding to the partially fulfilled indicators, and to document the measures adopted and their results in the progress report submitted for the intermediate evaluation, in accordance with the applicable ARACIS methodology and guide.

VII. Annexes

- [Schedule of the on-site visit](#)
- [Meetings minutes.](#)