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Accreditation of Study Programmes Assessment Report

Institution: European University of Moldova (EUM)

Study programme(s): Criminal Law

Assessment committee:

Stephen C. Shute (chair)	Professor, School of Law, Politics and Sociology, University of Sussex; United Kingdom
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Coordinator: Birgit Vilgats

Dates of the assessment visit: 06.05.2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 19.06.2015

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 09.07.2015.

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 4 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: 20.07.2015.

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I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
Study programme and its development	X		
Teaching and learning	X		
Teaching staff	X		
Students	X		
Resources		X	

Comments:

The European University of Moldova (EUM) is a private higher education institution. The EUM Faculty of Law includes four directions of specialist training in cycle II: Criminal Law, Economic Law, Constitutional and Administrative Law and International Law.

EUM prepared a good self-evaluation report (SER) which contained many helpful annexes, although not all were correctly numbered and some were missing from documentation sent to the Expert Team (ET). The University is a private for profit institution wholly owned by its rector who is the only shareholder. The University is housed in a modern building which provides some reasonable facilities for students and staff. However, the library needs greater investment if it is to meet general European standards. The best way to allow increased investment would be if the University were able to recruit larger numbers of students both to its BA programmes and to its MA programmes in Law. At the moment it is unable to do that because of its capacity constraints imposed by the Ministry of Education. The University has some enthusiastic staff teaching on MA in Criminal Law. In order to recruit talent to its academic posts the University pays a premium relative to the salary levels for academic lawyers in the state university sector. It will be necessary for the University, if it is to ensure a continued flow of talent into the Faculty of Law, to

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keep its salary levels competitive and this too will be facilitated by an enhanced income from a larger student base. The content of the programme should be kept under constant review in order to keep it up to date and relevant to employment needs in Moldova. Criminal Law is a particularly fast moving area and MA degree need to adapt to this.

Commendations:

1. The MA degree has been constructed in a way that fully conforms to the legislative framework in Moldova and the instructions issued by the Ministry of Education.
2. The EUM has a good set of QA policies and properly regulates the MA degree.
3. The EUM has a comprehensive website which makes available to students and applicants all the information they need.
4. The building provides a good home for the Faculty of Law and the students.

Recommendations:

1. The ET recommends that EUM introduces greater choice within the programme. At the moment students only have limited opportunity to select specialist courses that are particular interest to them and relevant to the intended future employment.
2. The library, and in particular the availability of access to modern European databases of journals and other legal materials, needs to be improved. This will require further investment in this area by the EUM.
3. EUM, in order to improve its graduates and academic staff's competitiveness has to turn more attention to the mobility issues.
4. The skills and competences of the students in the area of academic writing and research have to be paid much more attention. At present the ET observes that this aspect of the programme is still underdeveloped.

II Assessment areas and requirements

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'	X		

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Collected evidence:

- Strategic development plans of the university and faculty of law for the period 2010-2015 (Annex 7)
- Department of Criminal Law's activity plan (seen onsite)
- Orders of the Ministry of Education authorising the study programme no 85 of 15.02.2008 and no 850 of 29.11.2010 (Other annexes – Annex 8 and 9)
- Curriculum of the MA programme in Criminal Law (Annex 1)
- Curriculum of the BA programme in Law (Annex 2)
- Study plan for MA programme in Criminal Law (Annex 4)
- Description of the courses (Annex 3)
- Cooperation agreements with other national and international universities and employers (Other annexes – Annex 13, 14, 15)
- Model of questionnaires for employers and students (Other annexes – Annex 34, 35) and the information obtained during the interviews with employers and students.
- Information available in the SR and collected during the interviews on-site.

General comments:

The MA programme in Criminal Law is authorised by the Ministry of Education and functions in accordance with the national and internal normative acts. The MA programme is distinct from that of the Bachelor level. The content of the programme is consistent with its content and is internationally comparable. However there is still room for improvement by including more specialised courses, revising and updating the titles of the disciplines and provide more criminal law oriented electives. There is a good cooperation with the labour market and there are evidences that employers' suggestions are taken into consideration for the development of the programme. Nevertheless, there is still a need to increase the employment rate which is about 50%.

Commendations:

1. Cooperation agreements with various representatives of the labour market and a good understanding of the labour market needs.
2. The study programme was subject to changes in response to the suggestions from employers and graduates.
3. Reliable tracking mechanism in place that allows monitoring the employment rate and career development of the graduates.
4. Special mandatory course for developing research skills for students.

Recommendations:

1. Develop an action plan targeted at the implementation of the strategic development plan and ensure that results of the implementation are taken into account for future planning.
2. Improve the content of the MA programme by revising the title of the disciplines, introduce specialised courses and offer free-chose disciplines that are more criminal law oriented.
- 3.

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<p>1.1.REQUIREMENT: A higher education institution regularly plans its development: the higher education institution has a development plan accompanied by an action plan to ensure sustainability both in the institution and in a given study programme. The implementation of the action plan is analysed and forms the basis for planning of the next development period.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> Both, the university and the law faculty have approved Strategic development plans that cover the period 2010-2015 and establish clear development objectives related to the quality of the teaching staff, research activity, study programme development, a more solid partnership with the students and industry (employers), development of the existing resources, etc. Each Department has an annual action plan which organises the activity of the Departments. Nevertheless, it is recommended that an action plan is developed targeted at implementing the objectives of the strategic development plan and the results of the plan's implementation are analysed and serve as a basis for the following planning.</p>	
<p>1.2.REQUIREMENT: A study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The specialized master study programme in Criminal Law was introduced in line with the legal requirements on the organization of the first cycle master's degree courses, established by Government Decision no 1455 of 25 2007 and the Recommendations on Development of Master's Degree Curricula (approved by Order of the Ministry of Education and Youth no 85 of 15.02.2008). It was authorized for the first time by the Ministry of Education and Youth in 2008. Further on, the research study programme in Criminal Law was repeatedly authorized in 2008 and 2010. Since 2010, the university has 8 authorized programs by the Ministry of Education - 4 research and 4 professional development programmes – Order no 850 of 29 November 2010.</p>	
<p>1.3.REQUIREMENT: The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The title of the study programme is consistent with its content. Nevertheless, the university might consider revising the titles of the disciplines to make sure that they reflect the criminal law related content and introducing some specialized courses of importance for the industry, such as cyber-crime, terrorism, etc. The university is recommended as well to offer free choice disciplines which are more oriented towards the objectives of the study programme. (See the study programme available on the university's web-site - http://usem.md/uploads/files/Facultatea_de_Drept/Plan%20de%20Invatamint/Ciclul_II/Cercetare/Specializarea_Drept_penal_-_de_cercetare.pdf)</p>	
<p>1.4.REQUIREMENT: The conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship, support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p>	

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<p>The conduct of studies support achievements of the objectives of the study programme. The 150 hours per course include 50 hours of direct contact and 100 hours of individual work. The individual work of students comprises essays, case studies, writing court's decisions (see Curriculums for the disciplines of the study programme - http://usem.md/md/p/suport-didactic-drept-ciclul-2). This was confirmed by the teachers and students whom the ET met. As described under requirement 2.5, the university has a solid internships network which ensures that the internships are related to the field of study and contribute to achievement of the study programme's objective.</p>	
<p>1.5.REQUIREMENT: The objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme are in coherence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The structure and content of the study programme is internationally comparable.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The study programme is coherent with the EQF and is internationally comparable with other study programmes from other foreign institutions. Nevertheless, the title of some disciplines are not clearly related to criminal law, though the content is clearly related. For example, the title of the course on <i>Development of the regulatory framework regarding property rights in the Republic of Moldova</i> shall be revised in order to ensure that it reflects a criminal law related content. A significant part of the disciplines' titles refers to the word "problems" (which may be translated as issues). In that respect, other similar terminology might be considered and used, such as "aspects", "elements", etc. in order to ensure titles' diversity. The university also might consider introducing some specialized courses of importance for the industry, such as cyber-crime, terrorism, etc. The university is recommended as well to offer free choice disciplines which are more oriented towards the objectives of the study programme.</p>	
<p>1.6.REQUIREMENT The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master's study programme are clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master study programme in Criminal Law are distinct from those of the Bachelor's study programme in Law. The Master study programme contains some fundamental course units and is more focused on specialized course units related to criminal and criminal procedure law, which gives the opportunity to study more profoundly similar subjects studied during the 1st cycle study programme, or introduces new specialized courses which meet the needs of the industry, i.e. courses S.01.A.003 and S.01.A.004 related to economic crimes, and offences committed by persons with leading positions.</p>	
<p>1.7.REQUIREMENT: Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession. The study programme includes Fundamental disciplines: Psycho-pedagogy and National/international standards for preparing the master thesis; Specialized disciplines covering important current issues, such as: Economic crimes; Criminal liability of persons with leading positions; Enforcement law; Judicial expertise, etc. Likewise, the European integration objective of the country is ensured by the discipline on the European criminal law, comparative study. (See the study programme</p>	

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<p>available on the university's web-site - http://usem.md/uploads/files/Facultatea_de_Drept/Plan%20de%20Invatamint/Ciclul_II/Cercetare/Specializarea_Drept_penal_-_de_cercetare.pdf</p>	
<p>1.8.REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The university has cooperation agreements with various representatives of the labour market, which creates opportunities for students to have internships and connect more with potential employers, such as prosecutors' offices, courts, line ministries and other public authorities, Bar association, other universities, etc. The sound network with the representatives of the labour market ensures that their needs are known and taken into account. The university also monitors the degree of employment of the students who graduated the study programme. Based on the provided information it can be concluded that on average, at least 50% of the graduates are employed after their Master studies within the public or private sector. Three prominent persons among practitioners are members of the Quality Committee, thus ensuring that the representatives of the labour-market have an opportunity to participate at the development and quality supervision/improvement of the study programme.</p>	
<p>1.9.REQUIREMENT: Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The development of the study programme is one of the main objectives of the Strategic plan of the Faculty, which pursues, inter alia, to establish a more solid partnership with students and employers, which ultimately will have a positive impact on the appropriate development of the study programme. Three prominent persons among practitioners are members of the Quality Commission, thus having the possibility to propose recommendations for improvement and adjusting the study programme to the needs of the employers. A questionnaire has been developed for the employers which has the purpose to obtain information on the theoretical and practical abilities of the graduates and if there are any suggestions to improve the level of training of the students within the study programme. (Annex 35) Since 2012, students are able to have an impact on the development of the study programme by completing the questionnaires on teacher's assessment. The results of the questionnaires allows the faculty administration to learn the opinion of the students of the study process and propose, if that is the case, solutions to the identified shortcomings. Students are also able to assess the study programme and to influence its development by completing a questionnaire, at the end of the studies. The questionnaire focuses on the assessment of the teaching staff quality, level of training and knowledge, teaching methods, the quality and the content of the curricula, the quality and content of the course support and gives the opportunity to give suggestions and proposals for</p>	

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<p>improving the study programme. (Annex 34)</p> <p>The disciplines' curriculums are analyzed at least once a year by the teachers, who are also practitioners, including peer feed-back, based on the feedback from students and employers. The representatives of students and employers informed that they are satisfied with the content of the study programme. The university stated that there were no specific proposals to amend the programme, but in order to reflect the current needs of the industry, disciplines like economic offences and criminal liability of persons with leading positions, judicial expertise, enforcement law (bailiffs) were introduced. The Quality Commission prepare annually, since the academic year 2010-2011, reports analyzing the received feed-back and submitting proposals for the necessary changes. For example, in order to address the need for more practical skills, a mock court room was established. Likewise, as requested by the students, free Wi-Fi is available. No specific proposals for introducing or excluding the disciplines of the study programme were made. Students suggested that the library shall be supplemented and new resources made available and this was also recommended by the ET under requirement 5.6.</p> <p>The evidence presented during the site visit suggested that the curriculum had changed in recent years in response to suggestions from a variety of stakeholders, including the alumni and the employers.</p>			
<p>1.10. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of a study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.</p>			
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives. The members of the staff are also involved in the process of peer review, where they can assess the activity of their colleagues. The areas of assessment include teaching, research and external activity which can give a clear indication towards the objectives of the study programme and the role of the staff members in achieving them.</p>			
<p>1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.</p>			
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The university was accredited for organizing PhD studies since 2013 and currently there are 12 PhD students. This creates the opportunities for the graduates to pursue their doctoral studies within their university, which is a positive aspect.</p> <p>The study programme contains a special mandatory course aimed at developing research skills for the students that would be certainly helpful during their doctoral studies.</p>			

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
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mark with 'X'	X		
<p>Collected evidence: At the visit the team could get acquainted to documents related to the teaching process, study programs, internal QA regulations and documents, as well as other relevant strategies that were also available online. Also, at the visit, the team could see the mock Court-room for simulated trials, as well as the legal clinic facilities and other specific facilities that allow students to acquire specific legal techniques under supervision of the teaching staff. Also, internship portfolios were presented.</p>			
<p>General comments: The programme fullfills the criteria, as it respects both normative and technical criteria. Teaching methods seem to be adequate and up-to-date, as it resulted from both discussions with students and alumni that confirmed the teaching methods that academics presented as most used ones, as well as the existing online library. Learning outcomes are evaluated and the results of such processes are used for improvement and students are involved in research activities and academic competitions.</p> <p><u>Commendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. respect of normative criteria; 2. existence of internal regulations and QA policies; 3. transparent website <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. free choice disciplines more oriented towards the objectives of the study programme. 			
<p>2.1.REQUIREMENT: Study management is regulated, publicly available, and supports the achievement of learning outcomes. In course of study management development, the results of feedback surveys and the analysis of learning activities are taken into account.</p>			
<p><u>Comments:</u> The study programme functions according to specific regulations, <i>i.e.</i> the 2007 Government Decree for Master studies. The study programme under evaluation was duly authorized by the Ministry of Education in 2008 and 2010 and the curriculum was approved by the Senate of EUM prior to ministerial authorisations. The curriculum of the study programme is publicly available on the EUM website (http://usem.md/uploads/files/Facultatea_de_Drept/Plan%20de%20Invatamint/Ciclul_II/Cercetare/Specializarea_Drept_penal_-_de_cercetare.pdf).</p> <p>From documents available on the website under EUM Legal framework, all strategies, plans and regulations regarding the students admission process, conducting of studies process, rights and obligations of students, graduation requirements etc. the ET could deduce they are appropriate in terms of content and outcomes. The achievement of learning outcomes is supported by the study programme, which is in accordance to the Master Plan for Higher Education. The Explanatory Note regarding the study outcomes accompanies the Curriculum, as per</p>			

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<p>pt. 14 of the Master Plan from 2011. The study plan programme respects the normative requirements with regard to the existence of specific elements requested by the Master Plan (Psycho-pedagogy, Standards in preparing the Master Thesis and internship). From the analysis of the study plan (curriculum - Annex 20), one can state that the study programme allows students to achieve their learning outcomes and develop specific skills in relation to the study domain.</p> <p>As far as the analysis of learning activities and results of feedback surveys are concerned, from the evidences provided (Annexes 34, 35, 36, 66 and 71) it results that such mechanisms are in place and running, including feedback from employers. At the same time, Annexes 32 and 33, on QA regulations at EUM level, clearly state those principles.</p>	
<p>2.2.REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, efficient teaching strategies are applied (modern, interactive, teamwork-based, etc.) and oriented towards active learning of the students.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>From the SER one could conclude that efficient strategies are applied. The fact that all courses are published on the website is a plus for the students. At the same time, the free access to the electronic library is also a plus, but the university should increase the number of available resources. The concept of video-lessons is also a positive and modern tool and should be available for all disciplines.</p> <p>Also, at the visit, the ET learned that legal clinic facilities are available for students, as stated under point 2.4, thus allowing them to further develop their active learning.</p> <p>Team-work is stimulated, as results from the fact that EUM students attended different national and international contests. The SER mentions only two such events for which there are proofs of attendance (Annexes 37 and 38), but from discussions with students and teaching staff the ET learned that MA students also attended other students scientific events, organized by the State University from Chisinau, State University from Cahul. At the same time, at the visit, the ET could observe the fact that there were facilities that allowed team-work (mock court-room for simulated trials, forensic laboratory for preparing investigation-related documentation, IT laboratory). Also, from the website analysis, the ET could see that some call for papers for different conferences destined to students and academic staff were posted online.</p> <p>However, those activities should be carried-out on a more periodical basis, in order to fully achieve active learning of the students and further strengthen their research capabilities</p>	
<p>2.3.REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, up-to-date teaching materials are used.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>From the analysis of the available resources on the website and the list of volumes in the library, teaching materials are rather actualized. Still, there is room for improvement, especially with regard to the library.</p> <p>As stated above, there are facilities such as mock court-room for simulated trials, forensic laboratory for preparing investigation related documentation, IT laboratory, are interesting tools that allow students to get involved in the reality of the legal activities.</p> <p>Also, two interesting features found at the visit are the legal clinic and case-analysis at the level of the Court of Appel. Legal clinic represents a mechanism that allows students to deal with and treat real cases for people with limited revenues who need legal assistance and cannot afford-it. All these counselling activities are being performed under the supervision of members of the academic staff that function also as lawyers.</p>	

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<p>At the level of the Court of Appeals in Chisinau, practical exercises were organized by judges that belong to the academic staff of EUM, allowing students to analyse and discuss real legal cases with those judges.</p>	
<p>2.4.REQUIREMENT: Organisation of internship is clearly regulated, the requirements for the completion of internship are determined, the instructions for conducting the internship are available and the supervision of students in work environment is ensured.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> Internship is organized accordingly to the Master Plan and clearly stipulated in the curriculum and in the Diploma Supplement. From the evidences provided it results that internships have curricular support and function under EUM regulations. In the internship portfolio (Annex 40) both objectives and knowledge are outlined and, at the concrete level the process is monitored by a tutor transmitting methodical practice and individual tasks to the student. At the end of internship, each student is given a characterization and appreciation letter stating the exact content of the activities performed.</p>	
<p>2.5.REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for students and supporting the achievement of learning outcomes of study programmes.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The university provided a list with network partner organisations that can offer internships (Annex nr.13, 14, 15). At the same time, on the website there are some information about potential internships. An interesting detail is the fact that in order to secure internship places for all students, EUM concluded cooperation agreements with all major legal institutions from Moldova that ensure internship for all students. For that purpose, in exchange, EUM accepts some students without fee, at the recommendation of said institutions. From discussions at the visit, the ET learned that around 50% of the internships were transformed into full employments for graduates. One aspect that the visit ET learned from the students met is the fact that employed students had their internships organized at their workplaces and only unemployed students went to internships organized within a partner institution. Both categories of students had the same characterisation letter delivered and their internships specified in the Diploma Supplement.</p>	
<p>2.6.REQUIREMENT: Assessment of learning outcomes of students is performed in accordance with the existing requirements. Assessment methodology is consistent with learning outcomes and includes feedback supporting student development.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> There is an internal Regulation regarding the assessment of learning outcomes (Annex 36), which enacts principles of increasing objectivity and transparency of the assessment, active involvement of students in the assessment process and also involvement in the evaluation process of representatives of labour-market and major businesses from Moldova. The document stipulates that the assessment methods applied aim to ensuring the connection between curriculum objectives and learning outcomes. At the same time, according to art. 16 and 17 especially, student feedback is taken into consideration in the development of all evaluation processes.</p>	

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<p>Also, students that do not agree with the result of their evaluation have the possibility to appeal and be evaluated by another commission. At the visit the ET could see some samples of examination sheets, and some grade catalogues and one could state that the evaluation process allows to check the way in which students have achieved their learning goals. The grades are given based on a two layer system, one grade for the activity throughout the semester at the seminaries and another grade given at the exam, the final grade resulting as an average between the two of those grades. From the analysis of grades catalogues, the ET could see that the grading process is too generous (the vast majority of grades are 8, 9 or 10), and no overall failures were observed, with a 100% success rate for the students that took the examinations. It is strongly recommended that the evaluation at exams and final thesis levels is made thorougher, in order for the grading to be more critical and really reflect the quality of the papers. Also, considering the fact that in some cases students mentioned that at examinations they get practical cases to solve and they liked some of those teste, this method of evaluation could be used more widely instead of simple theoretical questions that only emphasise students' memorisation capacities.</p>	
<p>2.7.REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> EUM's internal regulations recognize prior learning outcomes that generated ECTS, mainly throughout the mobility system (Annexes 46 and 47). At the same time, in art. 15-17 of Annex 55 (Admission Regulations EUM) it is stipulated that for the 1st cycle can be admitted also graduates of different forms of studies and holders of different degrees. As far as 2nd cycle is concerned, a general regulation issued by the Ministry of Education stipulates recognition of prior competencies in IT and linguistic areas. At the same time, under point IV of the Ministerial Regulation regarding the Master Studies, it is stipulated that graduates of other domains than law at BA level can be admitted to the master programmes of the Academy, provided they prove the existence of 30 ECTS for compensating studies. From discussions with EUM representatives, it resulted that there were such cases of BA graduates in other domains that were admitted at the master programme under these auspices. Also, the ET learned from the management that some of their students were transferred from other higher education institutions in second or third year of studies, having them their ECTS recognized. At the same time, as far as prior work experience is concerned, students that prove such experience are exempted from attending courses and are allowed to present themselves only at final examinations.</p>	
<p>2.8.REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> There are two annexes regulating QA at EUM level (Annexes 32 and 33), which stipulate clearly the fact that there should be a systematic analysis of educational process results, as base of improvement measures and correlation with the needs of the labor market. For this purpose a specific QA Management committee was created (Annex 19), including representatives of students and main professions (Judges Association, Prosecutor's Office, Lawyers Association). The SER stipulates that this committee meets on a trimestrial basis and has made proposals that led to improvements of the curriculum. This information was confirmed during the visit.</p>	

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At the same time, there is an internal Regulation that stipulates the possibility of systematically review the study programme (Annex 26). Also, students are requested to fill-in questionnaires that allow the university to take improvement measures (Annex 27).	
2.9.REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in research and development activities, the supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, applied projects, final thesis) is well organised and the satisfaction rate with the quality of supervision is high.	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>As stated under points 2.2 and 2.3, team-work is stimulated and benefits from relevant equipment and processes as results from the fact that EUM students attended some national and international contests (Annexes 37 and 38) and student conferences. However, those activities should be carried-out on a more periodical basis, in order to really achieve active learning of the students.</p> <p>In SER it was stated that students develop seminar papers, projects, final theses whose main aim is to develop practical skills and are being evaluated in accordance to specific criteria, and at the visit the ET got confirmation of those aspects.</p> <p>The final thesis analysed by the ET allowed to conclude that they were of an acceptable scientific level, some of them bearing also a short one-page abstract in English language. The grades given to those thesis, upon public presentation, go from 8 to 10. The supervision of master theses should concentrate more thoroughly on correct referencing and also cover more specialized themes and concepts.</p>	

3. TEACHING STAFF	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'	X		
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic development plans of the university and faculty (Other annexes – 15 and 16) - Curriculum of the MA programme in Criminal Law (Compulsory Annex 1) - Curriculum of the BA programme in Law (Compulsory Annex 2) - Study plan for MA programme in Criminal Law (Compulsory Annex 4) - Questionnaires for students about the teachers, peer review questionnaires and peer review report (Other annexes – 27, 28 and 29) - List of teachers (Other annexes - 51) - Psycho-pedagogical module certificate (Other annexes - 52) - List of teachers with international participation (Other annexes – 54) - Rules on periodic assessment of the teaching staff quality of 2010 (Other annexes - 69) - List of the teaching staff who participate in the profile seminar and specialised scientific council (Other annexes - 70) 			

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- Information available in the SER and the information obtained during the onsite interviews.

General comments:

The number and the qualification of the teaching staff are adequate and complies with the legal requirement and the distribution of the full-time members by age ensures the sustainability of the programme. There are three full-time lecturers who are visiting lecturers in foreign universities, however further measures are needed to ensure that programme benefits of visiting lectures coming from outside Moldova. The research activity is efficiently planned and monitored and lecturers are actively involved in national and international research projects. At least twice a year internal scientific conferences and national/international conferences with other partner universities from Moldova are organised. Nonetheless, the international cooperation and research activities are mostly focused on neighboring countries and further efforts are needed to extend these activities to other countries, such as EU member states.

Commendations:

1. The number and the qualifications of the teaching staff complies with the legal requirements.
2. Stimulating system based on bonuses for those members of the academic staff who are actively involved in researching activities.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that a regular flow of visiting teachers from abroad participate in credit bearing courses of the programme and specialised seminars.
2. Extend the international cooperation and research activities with other countries, including EU member states.

3.1.REQUIREMENT: The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. At least 60% of the study programme is covered by full-time staff. 100% of full-time staff involved in the study programme have PhD degree or equal.

Comments:

The number of full-time teaching staff constitutes 80% out of the total academic staff of the study programme (8 out of 10 employees), thus complying with the legal requirements and exceeding the minimum legal threshold of 60% of full-time staff coverage with 20%. All full-time lecturers have a PhD degree.

3.2.REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.

Comments:

The sustainability of studies and study programme is ensured by a fair distribution of full-time teaching staff by age: 50% of the full-time lecturers

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<p>are young members aged between 35 and 44; the age range of other 25% of full-time lectures varies between 45 and 54; and the remained 25% of the full-time members exceeds the age of 55.</p>	
<p>3.3.REQUIREMENT: The total number and qualification of teaching staff is – based on their responsibilities, workload and the number of supervised students – sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The qualification of the teaching staff is adequate as both, the full-time staff and the lectures paid per hour have PhD degree, including one non-permanent member with a Habilitated Doctor degree (6 – PhD in law; 1- Dr. habil. In law; 1- in economics; 1 – in psychology; 1 – in philosophy) with a teaching experience ranging between 4 and 27 years. New members are subject to continuous training – psycho-pedagogical module of 30 academic credits. The university financial plan provides for financial resources for advanced training by means of practical training and courses of advanced training of teaching staff in the country and abroad based on bilateral agreements signed between institutions. In terms of the workload, the teaching staff of the study programme consists of 80% of full-time employees who can have a full-time position only in one university and, according to the data provided by the institution, the full-time members are usually employed for one teaching load (no data/annex to confirm that except the report). The overall workload of both, full-time and part-time lectures cannot exceed 1.5 teaching load and 250 hours. During the period 2009 – 2013, while the number of enrolled students varied between 41 and 55, the number of lecturers involved in the study programme has been constant – 10 employees. Bearing this in mind and the fact that the workload of the full-time staff is, as a rule one teaching load, it appears that the total number of the teaching staff is sufficient to accomplish programme objectives. As a result, it can be concluded that the number and qualification of the teaching staff is sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.</p>	
<p>3.4.REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> Acquiring teaching competences by the new staff members who completed the 3rd cycle is facilitated by organizing a mandatory psycho-pedagogical course of 30 credits, once in five years. The study process is facilitated by direct access to internet in the classrooms and lecture halls and the possibility to use the electronic version of the curricula and course notes, which are available on the university’s website. All members of the full-time staff have a PhD and students’ assessment of the teaching quality is “Good” out of the 4 options: very poor; poor; good; very good (see the Reports of the Quality Commission analyzing students’ feed-back in Annex 71).</p>	
<p>3.5.REQUIREMENT: The staff development system is effective: the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement, staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution.</p>	

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<p><u>Comments:</u> One of the key objectives of the Strategic plan 2011-2015 of June 2011 is to ensure the quality of teaching staff by developing a short, medium and long term programme for its development. Among other staff supporting measures, the strategic plan envisages identifying the needs of career development and promoting mechanisms for their fulfilment (by specialized trainings, further studies); providing logistic and financial support for lectures who are also involved in the 3rd cycle studies, etc. There is a 30 ECTS module on psycho-pedagogy for the new members of the academic staff and a special course for students in the master programme on psycho-pedagogy. The full-time members of the teaching staff are assessed annually according to the Rules on periodic assessment of the teaching staff quality The assessment reports are approved by the Department and the Quality Commission may decide on the measures needed for improving the quality. During the interviews the ET learned about university's stimulating system based on additional bonuses (one third of the salary in the form of a monthly payment for the following semester) provided for the members of the academic staff who are actively involved in academic research. In case of a more substantive scientific result, such as a book for example, the bonuses are higher and are negotiated at the rector level.</p>	
<p>3.6.REQUIREMENT: Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> Two members of the visiting lecturers mentioned in Annex 54 have been employed as a staff. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in this area and the faculty shall look to have a regular flow from outside Moldova to participate in credit bearing courses in a master degree programme. It would also be good to have a regular flow of visitors giving research seminars and papers.</p>	
<p>3.7.REQUIREMENT: The members of the full-time teaching staff of a higher education institution regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The university has three full-time lectures who are visiting lecturers in foreign universities of Ukraine, Italy, Russia and Romania, which ensures, to some extent, the opportunity to develop their skills, enhance the cooperation with the foreign universities and set up an international network. During the on-site, every member of the teaching staff claimed to participate at seminars and conferences organized abroad.</p>	
<p>3.8.REQUIREMENT: Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> Lecturers of the EUM are actively involved in national and international research activity and participate in scientific conferences, both at national and international level. EUM has been accredited for scientific research in the area of <i>European and national in the context of human rights</i>. According to the information of the Self-assessment report for the scientific activity 2008-2012, the research profiles included areas</p>	

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connected to the study programme: criminal law; criminology, criminal proceedings, forensics, etc. and one of research directions concerned *Public law in the context of European integration*. EUM, together with the Free International University of Moldova were the coordinators of an international research TEMPUS project on *Teaching, research* and implementing new teaching technologies (period 2012-2015). The international research activity of the EUM remains mostly focused in neighbour countries (Romania, Ukraine) and Russia, though some articles were also published in German and Spanish scientific journals (Annex 12).

The ET learned that the university organizes at least twice a year internal scientific conferences and national/international conferences with other partner universities from Moldova. For example, international scientific conference together with Cazani University (Russia) on *Stability, economic development and prosperity – European space (2015)*; international scientific conference organized together with Academy of Science (Moldova) on *European approach in research and innovation (2014)*; national conference on *Challenges for the protection of refugees (2013)*, etc.

EUM issues annually (for the 2014, twice per year) Scientific Journals of the university. The content of the Journals and the articles are available on the EUM's website (see <http://usem.md/md/p/anale-stiintifice>).

3.9. REQUIREMENT: Research activities of the teaching staff are planned and monitored efficiently.

Comments:

The research activity is monitored in compliance with the Rules on periodic assessment of the teaching staff quality of 2010. According to the rules, the assessment process comprises 4 steps: self-assessment; assessment by colleagues (peer review); assessment by students; and the final assessment by the head of department. The self-assessment of the full-time lectures is performed annually. The final assessment reports are analysed and approved by the Department and Faculty Council. The conclusions of the reports serve as a basis for the Quality Commission to establish adequate measures for the quality improvement.

During the site visit the ET learned that the EUM is actively involved in publishing scientific literature – examples of handbook for judges, internal journals have been presented. Likewise, under the condition of a thorough quality selection, the university provides the opportunity to cover the publishing expenses for the books/research papers prepared by the staff members.

During the interviews the ET learned about university's stimulating system based on additional bonuses (one third of the salary in the form of a monthly payment for the following semester) provided for the members of the academic staff who are actively involved in academic research. In case of a more substantive scientific result, such as a book for example, the bonuses are higher and are negotiated at the rector level.

4. STUDENTS	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'	X		

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Collected evidence:

- There is documentation to prove that the study programme has been authorized by the Ministry of Education and approved at the University itself
- The institution has a public website, where all relevant information is provided
- Documents on admission criteria correspond to normative criteria set by the Ministry of Education
- Cooperation agreements between EUM and more than 30 Moldovan universities or professional organisations (Annex 13)
- EUM cooperation agreements with more than 25 international academic institutions (Annex 15)
- Academic Mobility Regulations (Annex_47)
- Master's theses from year 2014/15
- Grading sheets from last academic year
- Annex 59, regarding the keeping track of EUM's graduates employment
- Decisions on the Office of Students Counseling in Career Guidance: EUM Senate Decision of 24 February 2014 on formation of the Office; EUM Senate Decision of 26 January 2015 on the Rules and Procedures of the Office
- Documents on participation of students in the EUM Senate (Annex_22) and in the Council of the Faculty of Law (Annex_23)

General comments:

The requirements of this sector are generally met, with the sole biggest problem being related to external mobility of students. The EUM respects all relevant normative acts in force in Moldova that regulate the study process on the master level and has organised its work based on these norms. The quicker development of the institution is severely hampered by Ministry of Education policies on dividing of study capacities. The ET learned from the SER that the number of second-cycle graduates as compared to the number of students enrolled to the second cycle increases every year.

Commendations:

1. The EUM is a popular law school in Moldova, which is in position to lure students from other academic institutions to continue their studies there.
2. There is a "legal clinic" operational at the EUM.
3. The EUM has a wide circle of academic partner organisations in Moldova and abroad, as well as a big network of professional partner organisations, which is helpful in order to facilitate mobility of students and to provide them with internship opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. The external mobility of students needs to be enhanced.

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<p>4.1.REQUIREMENT: The admission requirements for student applicants are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme. The admission of students is performed by procedures stipulated in the normative acts.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> As revealed by Annexes 55 and 56, the admissions criteria require an academic training of 240 credits obtained in the area of the study programme. A bachelor degree in a field other than that of the study programme determines the need for accumulation of at least 30 credits at certain fundamental and specialized courses, as ascertained by the EUM.</p> <p>Hence, it may be concluded that the admissions requirements are adequate and take into consideration the qualities necessary for completing the study programme.</p> <p>The ET notes also that the BA graduates from other universities and other original fields of study are accepted. In fact, a large number of students enrolled in the master programme have graduated from law studies in other universities (mainly State University of Moldova). It was noted that the University would have wanted to admit many more master students, both in this programme of criminal law and in the other MA programmes it runs. The numbers it could recruit were severely constrained by a ceiling imposed on all private universities by the Ministry of Education. Without this ceiling the EUM estimated that it could increase its intake of master students at least three times and perhaps as much as five times. When representatives from the employer organisations were asked about this, they took the view that it was in the interest of Moldova to produce a larger pool of well qualified master level graduates who were in a position to apply for criminal justice positions in their organisations. This would make it easier for them to deliver a high-quality criminal justice service to the Republic. It would also enable the EUM to develop its Faculty of Law and put it in a financial position to grow by recruiting a larger number of well-qualified staff, thus allowing it to compete more effectively on the international stage. Across Europe it is notable that the best law schools have grown significantly in size over the last 10-15 years. Unless Moldovan law schools are free to grow in this way, they will always be on the back foot and will be less likely to develop world-class reputations.</p>	
<p>4.2.REQUIREMENT: The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> There is a specific body, “The Office of Students Counselling in Career Guidance”, where students and academic staff work together to find the most suitable jobs for students. As witnessed on the site visit, the partner employers regularly send their job offers to the Office. Approximately 40-50 students of the 2nd cycle make use of this opportunity annually. The Accreditation Committee was not presented any proof of any other type of counselling being available to the students by the EUM.</p>	
<p>4.3.REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> As stated by representatives of EUM at the site visit and witnessed by Annex 13, there are cooperation agreements between EUM and more than 30 Moldovan universities or professional organisations. Amongst them are cooperation agreements with major employers, which enable</p>	

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<p>the students to take advantage of contacts with practitioners during their studies.</p> <p>The Faculty, within the limits created by the financial realities it faces, is active in organising international cooperation. It has concluded agreements providing opportunities to acquire double diplomas from a Moscow and an Italian university. However, because of budgetary constraints, the EUM has not been able to financially support external mobility of students. The ET observes based on the interviews conducted during the site visit that this situation would be different if the University were to be free from the restriction on its intake imposed by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>Internally students are encouraged to participate in meetings with practitioners.</p>	
<p>4.4.REQUIREMENT: Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>EUM has cooperation agreements with more than 25 international academic institutions (Annex 15). This shows a strong desire on the part of the EUM for cooperative enterprises. The representatives of the EUM stated during the site visit that formerly 5-10 students a year of the general number of EUM students participated in external mobility programmes, mainly in an eastern direction (Russia and Ukraine). In recent years, however, this number has dropped to 1-2 students a year. From the statements of the students, alumni, as well as the university leadership, it is clear that here is a strong interest in enhanced mobility, which is mainly hampered by financial constraints and the fact that most of the master students are working full time. Because of financial constraints the EUM is unable to substantially support any student mobility incentives, but the university leadership expressed its readiness to start doing so as soon as they can start operating on a stronger financial footing.</p>	
<p>4.5.REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The EUM students are well integrated in the university management at all relevant levels. Students are self-governing of their own affairs, social and academic alike. They are also members of the University Senate. There is no information of any international law students' organisations being active in the EUM, which remains a point of further development. In the framework of students' self-government it was established, based on the interviews with the students and the academic staff, that students organise their own social life at the EUM. According to SER they are also active in organising scientific undertakings (student conferences and research circles). Such events are regular in the EUM and are to a certain extent also supported by the University. However, the Accreditation ET was not presented with any more concrete data on the University's yearly expenditure on such enterprises or the concrete names or dates of any such events.</p>	
<p>4.6.REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Regarding academic fraud, including plagiarism, it was established by the accreditation ET that the EUM has a right to expel students who are caught plagiarising their master theses. Expelled students cannot resume their studies. The fight against plagiarism in master theses is well</p>	

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organised and comprises of the following. At first the choice of topics itself has to be agreed in advance with the supervisor. The supervisors are only responsible for approx. 5 theses per year, which enables them to look thoroughly into the content of the work and detect any signs of plagiarism at an early stage. The theses have to be presented to the Faculty in digital form. They are checked with a view of detecting plagiarism with special software, before printing and binding. They are then handed to the reviewers and finally there is an oral defence. Master theses are collected and archived by the Faculty.

Should cheating be detected in other written assignments or during examinations, the student will be removed from the respective examination or the written assignment will not be accepted. Such students can attempt to pass the exam or written assignment again. It was confirmed to the ET during the site visit that over last years no cases of plagiarism have been detected in master theses, whereas in case of examinations cheating occasionally occurred.

The ET observed (by the look into the master theses) that the number of references as compared to the number of used materials indicated that there still might be problems with correctly referring any materials actually used and citing the viewpoints of other authors relied upon in the respective theses. This opinion was further corroborated by the very low number of references in most of the theses reviewed by the ET. Based on the findings above, the ET takes the view that the EUM need to achieve a better level in their master theses, but especially to remove any doubt that academic fraud is being overlooked. It should give greater attention to the issues of correct referencing in academic research. It would be highly desirable to amend the study program with a view of offering more courses on academic writing and research methodology to future students.

4.7.REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates' employment and is monitoring the evolution of graduates' career.

Comments:

As witnessed by Annex 59, the Faculty keeps track of its graduates' employment. This was also strongly supported by alumni and representatives of employers (many of whom are also graduates of EUM) during the site visit. More than 60% of graduates of the MA programme are employed within reasonable time.

4.8.REQUIREMENT: The competitiveness of the graduates of a study programme is demonstrated by employment rate according to obtained qualification; unemployment rate; employment rate in other fields than the one studied within the programme.

Comments:

As noted above, more than 60% of graduates of the MA programme are employed within reasonable time in a field related to criminal law. The alumni and representatives of employing organisations took the view that a MA degree in criminal law obtained from the EUM is competitive within Moldova and presents the holder with good opportunities to be employed in the field studied.

4.9.REQUIREMENT: There is a system in place for monitoring academic progress. Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements. Effective measures are implemented to reduce the drop-out rates.

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Comments:

The dropout rate is small and clearly declining as observed by the ET from the statistics presented by the EUM. It was also established that academic progress of students is constantly and systematically monitored by the EUM. Students who drop out are enabled to resume their studies. If they do so within 3 years, all credits earned previously are taken into account.

However, the ET cannot but stress the importance of strict and objective grading of students. It was observed during the site visit that the grading of students exams as well as master theses is perhaps rather generous. Mostly the grades would fall between 8-10 points (on a scale of 1 to 10). No failed results were observed. In order to achieve a better standard of graduates it is advisable that the EUM would revise its policies in grading.

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
<p>Collected evidence: At the visit the ET had access to the EUM's budget, which is around 980000 euros for the last year. The ET visited all facilities, including the infirmary at the State University of Tiraspol, located across the street from EUM and which EUM has an agreement to offer medical facilities for the students. Also, the ET could visit the library (which should be updated), including by purchasing access to digital databases for the legal area.</p>			
<p>General comments: Despite the fact that EUM has had a constant growth of the budget and owns an important building with relevant up-to-date equipment, funding is still quite limited (almost 1 million euros for year 2014) and some facilities should be improved (especially the library dotation and access to specific online legal databases and journals), the general assumption is that this criterion is fulfilled only partially.</p> <p>Commendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good logistics and housing; 2. Facilities such as mock court room and court of appeal room, forensic and IT laboratories which facilitate the development of practical skills for students. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. improvement of library and purchase access to relevant scientific and research databases; 2. Update of existing library; 			

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3. Purchase of access to relevant research databases.	
5.1.REQUIREMENT: The financial resources of a higher education institution are adequate for conducting studies, development activities related to studies and supporting the development of the teaching staff.	
<p><u>Comments:</u> From the budget provided with the SER it appears that EUM has adequate financial resources to conduct studies in a stable way. The average for the last five years is around of 750000 Euros, with a maximum of 980000 Euros for 2014, as the income budget grew continuously in the 2009-2014 period. At the same time, one notices the fact that EUM has adequate logistics, both in term of housing as in terms of equipment. The financial position of the university is impeded by the restrictions on intake imposed by Ministry of Education. This creates potential issues for the future. Because of uncertainty created by the limits on intake it was decided that this criteria was only partially met.</p>	
5.2.REQUIREMENT: Trends in the number of students and graduates, and the budget of a higher education institution in the last three to five years indicate sustainability.	
<p><u>Comments:</u> From the data provided in the SER and verified at the visit, the number of graduates was increasing in terms of percentage related to the enrolled students. At the same time, as seen under point 5.1, the EUM budget showed an ascendent trend over the last five years, despite the fact that the number of enrolled students decreased a little bit between 2009 and 2013, due to the fluctuant number of the intake capacity approved by the Ministry of Education, as explained under point 4.1. Nevertheless, one could conclude that those data indicate sustainability.</p>	
5.3.REQUIREMENT: Teaching and learning environments have been developed according to the teaching and learning objectives, include all facilities necessary for conducting studies in a given study programme and are of adequate capacity considering the number of students (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories, rooms for students independent work and recreation, video projectors, internet etc.).	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The entire schooling environment is adapted to the learning objectives. The building has 7 floors, with a total of more than 4400 square meters of surface. The building was specially constructed for university purposes and has less than 10 years since it was built. The number of allocated rooms and seminars is adequate for the master programme, given the relatively reduced number of students. During the visit the ET learned about the facilities of the university such as the mock court room for simulating trials, forensics laboratory for</p>	

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<p>preparing investigation related documentation, IT laboratory, which are useful tools that allow the students to get involved in realistic legal cases. The university plans to open a legal clinic where the students can provide legal advice for the social vulnerable category of the population and has already a court of appeal room where the students can have practical exercises and discussions on legal cases with judges.</p>	
<p>5.4.REQUIREMENT: Both the conduct of studies and other activities of a higher education institution are supported by up-to-date information technology solutions, including the study information system, e-learning opportunities, and communication portals for students and teaching staff.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>In the SER and annexes provided it is stipulated that the IT solutions are adapted to recent evolutions. The website contains information about the study programs, including a portal for students, as well as access to the electronic library. There is free wifi access in the entire building.</p>	
<p>5.5.REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>EUM has not its own dormitories and medical services facilities. However, there are agreements with the State University of Tiraspol, located in the vicinity of EUM, for providing housing and medical services to the students. At the visit, the ET could see the medical point within the State University of Tiraspol, located just in front of EUM.</p>	
<p>5.6.REQUIREMENT: A library supports the conduct of studies ensuring that up-to-date information sources are available, and provides students with the opportunities for independent work.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>From the analysis of the available resources on the website and the list of volumes in the library, teaching materials are rather actualized. However, while analysing the available books in the library, the ET could see that available books are rather scarce in terms of volume. Despite this, there are some recent international publications. The fact that the University has also concluded an agreement with the State University of Moldova in order to grant access to the students to its libraries overcomes this drawback, but the university should invest in more books. At the same time, the electronic library facilities should be strengthened and the university should also acquire access to international databases, in order to ensure thus added value for students' independent work.</p>	