

The Assessment Decision of the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education

12/10/2015

A proposal to the Minister of Education
of the Republic of Moldova

NOT TO ACCREDIT
the Master's study programme "Patrimonial Law"
of The State Agrarian University of Moldova

Acting in accordance with the authorization granted by the § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) and based on section 33.2 of the document "Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Moldova", the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education shall state the following.

1. On February 23, 2015, the Director of EKKA approved by her order the following composition of the

Assessment Committee:

Kristiina Tõnnisson – Chair	Director of European College, University of Tartu; Estonia
Adrian Ermurachi	Senior consultant, General Directorate for Policy Coordination, External Assistance and Central Public Administration Reform; PhD student; Moldova
Tanel Kerikmäe	Professor, Tallinn Law School, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology; Estonia
Yuliya Vashchenko	Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Faculty of Law, Administrative Law Department, Associate Professor; Ukraine

2. The Assessment Visit to the State Agrarian University of Moldova took place on May 7, 2015.
3. The Assessment Committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA on June 9, 2015. The Assessment Committee received the comments of the State Agrarian University of Moldova on June 24, 2015 and approved the final version of the component assessments on July 3, 2015.
4. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the assessment report containing the component assessments to the members of the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education on September 24. The assessment report forms an integral part of the assessment decision. The report will be made available on the EKKA website.
5. **The component assessments were as follows:**

Study programme and its development	Does not conform to requirements
Teaching and learning	Partially conforms to requirements
Teaching staff	Does not conform to requirements
Students	Partially conforms to requirements
Resources	Partially conforms to requirements

6. The EKKA Quality Assessment Council discussed the assessment report along with the comments of the State Agrarian University of Moldova and other relevant materials at its session on October 12, 2015 with the participation of 9 Council members. The Council decided to point out the following strengths and areas of improvement of the Master's study programme "Customs Law":

6.1.

Study programme and its development	Does not conform to requirements
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Strengths

- The management and the teaching staff contribute to further development of the institution and strengthening of its market position.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The profile of the programme is not clear. The structure and content of the study programme is not internationally comparable.
- The objectives of the study programme are very general and do not reflect the specific character of the programme. It is necessary to put the objectives and the learning outcomes of the Programme and its content into correspondence.

- The content and learning outcomes of several courses within the Masters’ programme are not clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor’s study programme.
- The title of the study programme is not consistent with its content. It is recommended to consider two options: 1) to change the title of the programme from “Property Law” to “Legal protection of property in Agricultural sector” (however, such programme will be too narrow and will not provide an opportunity to use all strengths of such specialized institution as SAUM) or 2) to establish the master programme in Law directly related to the Agricultural Sector, e.g. “Land and Agricultural Law”, “Land, Agricultural and Environmental Law”, etc. It is recommended to focus on legal issues of property protection in Agricultural sector in the titles and the content of the study disciplines. The facilities of the university can provide the basis for the establishment of the contemporary master study programme in Agricultural Law based on the interdisciplinary approach.
- The activities in the action plan of the Faculty of Cadastre and Law are defined in a rather descriptive manner. It is recommended to specify the goals, tasks and actions of the Faculty of Cadastre and Law with the consideration of the needs of law studies and research. It is recommended to define the actions in the development plans in more details, stipulate the timetable for the completion and persons responsible for the relevant action, and to establish the process of progress monitoring.
- There is no information on the organization and supervision of the independent work of students in the syllabi. It is recommended to amend the syllabi with the respective information.
- It is recommended to strengthen the relations of the institution with the potential employers, in particular, via establishment of partnership with the stakeholders from the agricultural sector.

6.2.

Teaching and learning	Partially conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- Usage of the Moodle by the teaching staff and students of the MA programme.
- Strong practical component of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is a need to amend the syllabi with the recent references, as well as with references to the materials prepared by the teaching staff involved in the teaching process.
- The syllabi of the courses do not include comprehensive information on the assessment of learning outcomes of students. It is recommended to amend the syllabi with the clear information on interim and final assessment forms and also to include in the syllabus the requirements for the internship completion documents.

- It is recommended to provide the base of internship directly in accordance with the topic/title of the master thesis.
- It is recommended to broaden the cooperation with the institutions from private agricultural sector.
- It is recommended to establish the system of monitoring of the residual knowledge of students in order to avoid possible over-assessment of students' progress.
- Currently there is no such a system for the recognition of the prior learning and work experience in place. It is recommended to establish the system based on the legislative provision.
- While the majority of students are already employed and they are not interested in the research activity, the promotion "for research" should get special attention from the staff and management.

6.3.

Teaching staff	Does not conform to requirements
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Strengths

- Despite the very limited number of the teaching staff, the general feedback to teaching was very positive.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Currently, the teaching staff is very limited, as there are only 5 full-time members for the whole programme. The number of full-time teaching staff of the programme and their qualifications is not sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.
- The system of self-development of teaching staff exists in theory, but it needs strategic budgeting and a well-developed motivation scheme for faculty members elaborated at the managerial level.
- There is no evidence of visiting teaching staff members, including those from foreign higher education institutions. It is recommended to invite foreign visiting professors and qualified practitioners to enrich the study environment in the master programme.
- Currently, the members of teaching staff of the programme do not develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions nor participate in international networks. The programme leaders should use university international cooperation agreements to involve the faculty members to international research networks. The teaching staff should improve their knowledge of and find international self-improving opportunities to guarantee their competitiveness within the university and also at national level.
- The management of the faculty could not prove any sustainable academic policy in providing support to the academic staff in their research activities. The research as such is not clearly defined and the faculty members are not guided to the international standard-

based research world. The programme leaders should plan and monitor research activities as a part of strategy, not dependent on the particular individuals working in the faculty.

- The management of the programme should take steps in motivating the faculty members to become proactive in conducting international research, to raise the quality of teaching, as well as positioning the programme more strongly within the university. One method for raising the motivation of faculty members and students to be engaged in international networks is to encourage them to improve their English language skills.

6.4.

Students	Partially conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- The university has a valid register for monitoring the graduates' employment.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- No one from the patrimonial law students has ever participated in any international mobility programmes. It is recommended to involve master students from the Patrimonial Law in internal and external mobility.
- The competitiveness of the graduates of the study programme is not too well demonstrated by employment rate. From 66 students which graduated the Patrimonial Law programme during the period 2011-2014 only 26 are working based on the obtained qualification. It is recommended to increase the employment rate based on obtained qualification.
- No one of the interviewed students have had heard about the Department of Guidance and Career Counselling (DGCC) and the possible support/ counselling provided by this department. It is recommended to improve the actual capacity of DGCC.
- It is recommended for the school and for the students themselves to promote the possibilities to be involved and to follow decision making processes within the school.
- Not all of the students who have graduated from the programme meet the legal requirements (300 credits for the overall cumulative duration of studies in cycles I and II). The university should monitor more closely the legal requirements for graduation.

6.5.

Resources	Partially conforms to requirements
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Strengths

- SAUM as an institution is financially sustainable.

Areas of Improvement and recommendations

- The financial resources on departmental/programme level are inadequate. The support mechanisms of the particular master programme at the university managerial level are neither visible nor clearly articulated. It is recommended to have a clear and adequate budget for the programme/department established by the University management.
 - The literature in the field of patrimonial law is very limited. There are only very few international textbooks translated into Russian or Romanian languages. International databases are missing, except Agora, which, however, does not include much legal literature. Based on the feedback from the students and alumni this database is almost never used. The university should pay more attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in national databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources.
- 7.** According to section 33.2 of the document "Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Moldova", if at least one of the component assessments is "does not conform to requirements", the Quality Assessment Council shall decide to make a proposal to the Minister of Education not to accredit the study programme.
- 8.** Taking into account the component assessments referred to in clause 5 and that:
- The title of the study programme is not consistent with its content.
 - The programme's profile is not clear. The content of the programme is too eclectic and does not reflect the special profile of the institution.
 - The objectives of the study programme are very general and do not reflect the specific character of the programme.
 - The content and learning outcomes of several courses within the Masters' programme are not clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme.
 - The number of full-time teaching staff of the programme is not sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.
 - There is no evidence of visiting teaching staff members, including those from foreign higher education institutions.
 - The members of teaching staff of the programme do not develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions nor participate in international networks.
 - The management of the faculty could not prove any sustainable academic policy in providing support to the academic staff in their research activities. The research as such is not clearly defined and the faculty members are not guided to the international standard-based research world.
 - The competitiveness of the graduates of the study programme is not demonstrated by employment rate.

- Not all of the students who have graduated from the programme meet the legal requirements (300 credits cumulatively for I and II cycle).
- The financial resources on departmental/programme level are inadequate.

the Council DECIDED

To make a proposal to the Minister of Education of the Republic of Moldova not to accredit the Master’s study programme “Patrimonial Law” of the State Agrarian University of Moldova.

The decision was adopted by 9 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

9. Contestation:

9.1. Evaluation proceedings conducted by EKKA may be disputed if the proceedings do not comply with the procedure provided for in this document. The challenge is filed with the Management Board of the Archimedes Foundation within 30 working days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding.

9.2. The assessment decision by the EKKA Quality Assessment Council may be disputed after adoption of the corresponding administrative decision by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

Tõnu Meidla
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council