EKKA

Accreditation of Study Programmes
Assessment Report

<u>**Institution:**</u> **Trade Cooperative University of Moldova**

<u>**Study programme:**</u> **Professional Master in Public Law**

<u>**Assessment committee:**</u>

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Dates of the assessment visit: 22.05.2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 10.07.2015
Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 24.07.2015

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 5 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: 07.09.2015

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	

General introduction:

The Trade Cooperative University of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as TCUM) was established by the Government of Moldova in 1993 with the purpose of training specialists in the commercial-economic field mainly for the needs of consumer cooperatives. TCUM is based on the infrastructure of the Cooperative College and is subordinated to the Consumer Cooperatives Union of Moldova. The cooperative education in Moldova, in which TCUM plays a special role, has a specific legal status governed by the Law on Consumer Cooperation.

TCUM provides education at the Bachelor's level (1st cycle), Master's level (2nd cycle) and Doctoral level (3rd cycle). In the field of law, TCUM conducts studies on three master programmes: "Public Law", "Economic Law" and "Customs Activity".

The professional master programme "Public Law", which is being evaluated, is a programme with the duration of 1.5 years of studies, three semesters and 90 credits. The programme is conducted by the Department of Law, established in 1995 and currently operating within the Faculty of Management and Law.

Comments:

The most apparent strength of the Public Law study programme in TCUM is its clear position and visibility in the labour market. One of the important aims of the programme is to produce competent workforce for the consumer cooperatives in Moldova. This means that TCUM has very good ties and cooperation with several companies and institutions that provide students with various internship opportunities and give TCUM valuable feedback regarding the study programme.

The study programme itself is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force, but taking into account that the main focus of the programme is administrative law concerning trade and industry, could possibly use an even more clear focus regarding the title and the content of the programme, e.g Economic Administrative Law. TCUM regularly plans the development of the study programme: the institution has a development plan accompanied by an action plan to ensure sustainability both in the institution and in a given study programme. The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme presented are in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework. The content and the learning outcomes of the programme are clearly distinguishable from those of the bachelor study programme; there is a logical structure of the master programme. Development of the study programme takes into consideration the major trends of the labour market. The programme is developed and perfected continuously, taking into account the feedback from all the important stakeholders. However, it would also be advisable to adopt a more systematic approach towards gathering processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

The students are generally satisfied with their studies and have good informal relationship with the teachers. The academic staff is experienced and well qualified. The ratio between the master students and the teaching staff is favourable. However, there is a consistent lack of international focus, both in teaching and learning. Therefore, it is essential to develop international mobility of both students and the academic staff, of which an important part is the improvement of English language proficiency. Also, the syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in English or French. In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it is recommended to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to provide more choices to students and make academic mobility more attractive.

In order to further support student development, it would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments. Also, TCUM should establish a psychological counselling system and inform students better about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encourage them to take advantage of such possibilities. In addition, a formal system of detecting academic fraud should be established in the University.

The financial resources available for the master's programme implementation are substantially sufficient and conform to the main requirements. The budget planning in general is sustainable. However, the trend is that the numbers of students and financial resources are slightly decreasing, which might pose some risk to financial sustainability. Also, the student numbers have been quite volatile over the years.
It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the library and support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.

The classrooms are equipped sufficiently, the equipment is renewed periodically. However, there is still room for the improvement, in particular, in part of library's equipment and further development of ICT solutions. When replenishing the library, attention should be paid to the modern sources of information, especially investing in international academic databases and training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. At the University, access should be enabled to legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline, BeckOnline etc). In the study processes, the use of such databases should be promoted, as there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles.

Commendations:

- Good visibility of the programme in the labour market in the Republic of Moldova;
- Good employment rate of the graduates;
- Teaching staff is balanced by age and there is a sign of academic continuity;
- Teaching staff finds time to publish teaching materials for their courses;
- Internship is well organised and the University guarantees the students a place of internship due to specific agreements or good cooperation with many companies;
- The workload of academic staff is well-balanced according to the ratio between teachers and students;
- Financial resources of TCUM are sufficient; budget planning has sustainable character;
- Widespread usage of Moodle platform providing the students information regarding the courses online.
- Students' suggestions and feedback is considered valuable input to the University and faculty.
- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high.

Recommendations:

- Taking into account that the main focus of the programme is administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the substance of the program even more (e.g. Economic Administrative Law). Such a focus would also help to differentiate the program from other master level programmes offered by other by HEI-s in Moldova that specialize in Public Law.
- The study programme would be more efficient and focused if there would be more disciplines dealing with International Economic Law, e.g. WTO rules, EU economic relations with non-member countries, International Arbitration etc.
- TCUM should consider gathering feedback from the students more frequently than at the end of the academic year – e.g at the end of each study discipline. That would enable a more dynamic approach to study programme development. It is also advisable to adopt a more systematic/structural approach towards processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.
- Syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in English or French.
- When replenishing the library, attention should be paid to the modern sources of information, especially investing in international academic databases and training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. At the University, access should be enabled to legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline, BeckOnline etc). In the study processes, the use of such databases should be promoted, as there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles.
- In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of public law. Also, students should be provided with internship opportunities abroad.
- Master students should be involved in broader research and development activities.
- It is recommended to consider the possibility to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It would provide more choices to students, but also increase the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility, and therefore again make academic mobility more attractive to the students.
- The methodological training of the teaching staff should be continuous and systematic. Teaching competence should be considered as one of the performance indicators of the staff.
- It is recommended to increase the international experience for teaching staff, also outside Romania. In order to achieve that, it is advisable to promote academic mobility among the teaching staff and actively seek opportunities to participate in international cooperation.
- It is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes all important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers.
- TCUM should establish a formalized and effective psychological counselling system for the students. Also, students should be better informed about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encouraged to take advantage of such possibilities.

- It is recommended to seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, seminars etc).
- The University should seek ways how to formally strengthen their ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- The faculty should try to find a way to decrease the dropout rate of their students.
- It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the library and support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.

Recommendation to the Ministry of Education

- According to the Framework Plan for higher education (Order of the Ministry of Education no 455 of 2011 § 62) for the master studies, a course shall have 5/10/15 credits and subsequently one semester shall plan 6-2 coursers/modules. This means that all courses on master's level must have the same amount of ECTS (5 ECTS) with the same number of contact hours and hours for individual work. Some courses also are "combined courses" and they offer 10 ECTS. The assessment committee recommends considering changing this rule in order to enable the universities offering master's level programmes some additional flexibility and to support the academic mobility.

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**		
Collected evidence: • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Legislation of the Republic of Moldova. • Internal regulations of TCUM; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.			

General comments:

Based on available documents and on the discussions during the assessment visit, the assessment committee is convinced that the master programme in Public Law substantially conforms to requirements.

The study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. Considering the majority of the subjects / study disciplines within the programme as well as the learning outcomes of the curriculum, the title of the study programme is consistent with its content. However, taking into account that the main focus of the programme is administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the substance of the program even more, (e.g. Economic Administrative Law.) Such a focus would also help to differentiate the program from other master level programs offered by other HEI-s in Moldova that specialize in Public Law.

The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework. The courses and study disciplines taught within the master programme are distinguishable from those proposed in bachelor's level study programme. Study disciplines are presented in a logical succession. Development of the study programme takes into consideration the major trends of the labour market. The programme is improved continuously, taking into account the feedback from the students as well as the teaching staff and the employers. However, it would also be advisable to adopt a more systematic approach towards gathering and processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

The academic staff is aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.

Commendations:

- Development structure ensures sustainability and continuous development of the study programme.

- Graduates acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the labour market.

Recommendations:

- Taking into account that the main focus of the programme is on administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the substance of the program even more on national and international economic administrative law (e.g. Economic Administrative Law).
- TCUM should consider gathering feedback from the students more frequently than at the end of the academic year – e.g at the end of each study discipline. That would enable a more dynamic approach to study programme development. It is also advisable to adopt a

more systematic/structural approach towards processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students English language skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

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.

Comments:

TCUM has implemented a development plan at the University, faculty and department level for programs, research and students ("University Development Strategy for the years 2011-2015", see SER) that is coordinated with the Operational Strategic Plan of the University (2011-2015) regarding the basic guidelines according the organization of scientific research work of teachers and students. The strategy and the operational plan together form a basis for the TCUM annual Complex Plan of Activity (see SER, Annexes).

The Department of Law operating within the Faculty of Management and Law at TCUM is responsible for the study program and the regular development. The Faculty of Management and Law has a Strategic Plan correlated with the Operational Strategic Plan of TCUM that sets specific objectives for all the study programs of the faculty. The Law Department has a strategic plan for its development (B1), which includes strategic development objectives of the law programme for cycle-I as well as the three master programmes.

The structure of the study programme ensures sustainability and serves at the basis for further development. There is a system of regular assessment of the curriculum and the satisfaction of the employers and graduates. The interviews conducted with the teaching staff and students confirmed that the results of such assessment are taken into account by the management when developing the programme.

1.2. REQUIREMENT: A study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force.

Comments:

The study programme was established in 2008 and was authorized by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova on 30 May 2008 (order no. 379 of 30.05.2008 (see SER Annex) and is in accordance with the Law on Education and the state Framework Plan adopted by the Government Decision no 1455 in 25.12.2007. The curriculum also respects the impact of the Bologna Higher Education System and is based on the ECTS transfer system.

The Order no. 455 of the Ministry of Education issued on June 3, 2011, establishes requirements for the study plans at Master's level. It is the requirement for the professional Master's programmes (90 credits) to be structured in the following way: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Internship (10 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15-25 ECTS), and Specialized disciplines (25-35 ECTS) among which there should be up to 20% alternative disciplines.

The structure of the Master's programme "Public Law" is as follows: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15 ECTS), Specialized disciplines (35 ECTS) including two optional/alternative disciplines (5 ECTS), Practical training (10 ECTS). Therefore, the study programme is in full compliance with the requirements foreseen in the Order of the Ministry of Education and also other normative acts in force.

1.3. REQUIREMENT: **The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.**	

Comments:

The title of the study program is „Professional Master in Public Law". This title is general consistent with its content as it offers professional training of qualified specialists. However, taking into account that the main focus of the programme is administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the substance of the programme even more (e.g. Economic Administrative Law.)

Also, the committee noted that at the moment, the range of topics selected by the students was somewhat diffuse and not entirely consistent with the focus of the study programme.

- **Recommendation:** Taking into account that the main focus of the programme is administrative law concerning trade and industry, it is recommended to consider focusing the title and the substance of the programme even more (e.g. Economic Administrative Law.) Such a focus would also help to differentiate the program from other master level programs offered by other by HEI-s that specialize in Public Law. Concentrating on the unique focus of the programme might later give the graduates an advantage in the competitive Moldovan labour market.

  To achieve the objectives of the study programme, it would also be advisable for the faculty to make sure that all the topics of students' final theses are consistent with the focus of the programme.

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.**	

Comments:

According to the information presented in the SER and obtained during the site visit, it can be confirmed the conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship in general support achievement of the objectives of this study programme. However, the discussions with the students revealed that as a lot of the students are already employed and the master courses begin immediately after the working hours, the students are quite tired during the contact hours. Taking into account that for 90 ECTS, students also have an independent workload of 25-30 hours per credit point, it is questionable whether the students actually spend enough time on their studies during the semester to meet these requirements.

The available study plan and the detailed curriculum supports the objectives of the study program through individual work and practical training. Contact hours with academic teaching staff and individual work are integrated and compulsory and mandatory subjects are offered.

The internship is organized in a professional manner and according to the information obtained during the site visit, the regulation on organizing internship (see Annex B. 8), the guidelines on the organization and conduct of internship (Annex B.9) and the further documents (e.g. Convention partnership on internship Annex B.11 and B.11.2), students gain support from the University as well as from the Department.

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.**	

Comments:
The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme presented in the Explanatory Note are in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework. The structure and content of the study programme is comparable to other HEIs in Moldova and internationally, to Romania. The programme follows the regulations of the Ministry of Education and the requirements of the Bologna Process (incl ECTS).

The objectives of the curriculum, its content and learning outcomes are in accordance with the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The learning-outcomes are comparable with other similar study programmes/plans of HEIs of Moldova and also other Romania, like the master programme in Constitutional Law of the Faculty of Law of the University of Bucharest, the master programme in Public Law of the Faculty of Law of the Moldova State University or the master programme in Financial and Tax Law of the Department of Economics and Law of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (see list in the SER). As to other countries, the study programme cannot be considered to be internationally comparable due to the very narrow focus of the programme that is not very common in European countries. In order to add some international dimension to the programme, the committee would suggest to include in the curriculum some disciplines dealing with International Economic Law (see also the recommendation under criteria 1.7).

The system of distributing the amount of ECTS is only partially internationally comparable because according to the Framework Plan for higher education (Order of the Ministry of Education no 455 of 2011 § 62) for the master's studies, a course shall have 5/10/15 credits and subsequently one semester shall plan 6-2 coursers/modules.

- **Recommendation to the Ministry of Education:** According to legislation, all courses on master's level must have the same amount of ECTS (5 ECTS) with the same number of contact hours and hours for individual work. Some courses also are "combined courses" and they offer 10 ECTS. The assessment committee recommends considering changing this rule in order to enable the universities offering master's level programmes some additional flexibility and to support the academic mobility.

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.	

Comments:

The SER, the study programmes and the discussions during the assessment visit confirmed that the objectives, the content and the learning outcomes are clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme ("Law").

1.7.REQUIREMENT: Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.	

Comments:

The curriculums as well as the additional documents presented by TCUM clearly show a logical structure of the master programme. The study programme begins with introductory disciplines to the field, such as Parliamentary Law and Public Administration and political relations following by specialized courses on Real Estate Cadastre and Comparative Tax Law, etc.

- **Recommendation:** However, especially in the light of new developments in Moldova, the study programme would be even more efficient and focused, and also internationally comparable if there would be more disciplines dealing with International Economic Law: e.g. WTO rules, EU economic relations with non-member countries, International Arbitration etc.

1.8.REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market.	

Comments:

SER and the interviews conducted with the stakeholders during the assessment visit confirm that development of the study programme takes into consideration the major trends of the labour market.

TCUM fulfils the staffing needs of 170 companies involved in the Central Union of Consumer Cooperatives in Moldova that have a continuous demand for lawyers. Also, there are demands for certain competences from the labour market representatives who also provide internships to

the students and later employ them in their structures. The content of the study program is continuously improved to assure that the graduates are educated according to the expectations of the employers. Accordingly, in the 2014/15 academic year, some new subjects were introduced in the curriculum to the specialization of Public Law, like Dispute Resolution in National Law.

1.9.<u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders.**	

<u>Comments:</u>

The programme is developed continuously. The study plans are revised annually and according to the information presented in the SER, the main stakeholders are involved in this process and regularly give their feedback.

Both the dean and the students confirmed that at the end of the academic year, master students are asked to fill in a questionnaire where they can make their proposals and give feedback about the course. According to the Quality Management System implemented in TCUM, the course sheets, curricula and the teaching methods of the teachers undergo development throughout the academic year, taking into account the results of course evaluations performed every six months at the end of each course. There are also student representatives in the Methodological Council and the Senate of the University. At the end of each year, feedback is also collected from the teachers, some of whom are members of the Faculty Council, the Senate or the Methodological Council.

According to the SER and the discussion with the Dean, each year, the founder of TCUM provides expertise concerning the programmes and thus provides the University with the opinions of the employers regarding the Public Law programme. Employers are also represented in the Senate of the University. Under the contracts concluded with companies and institutions, TCUM has an obligation to ask for their feedback.

The Quality Management System of TCUM also requires asking for regular feedback from the employers and the graduates. However, during the assessment visit, the committee received no sufficient evidence about TCUM asking for any feedback from the alumni. The alumni have good informal contact with the teachers.

According to the information presented in the SER and according to the information obtained during the assessment visit, this feedback is used while the school is planning amendments and improvements. However, it remained unclear to the committee how the process of collecting the feedback from different stakeholders and taking its results into account (as described also under the Quality Management System) looks like in practice. The committee finds that it would be advisable to adopt a more systematic/structural approach towards processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

- **Recommendation:** It is advisable for TCUM to adopt a more systematic/structural approach towards processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

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.	

Comments:

The interview with the academic employees conducted during the site visit proved a strong awareness of the teaching staff of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives. The teaching staff makes considerable efforts for the assimilation of master students' knowledge, by using various modern methods of teaching. The teaching staff elaborates the course learning outcomes in accordance with general objectives of the study programme.

1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.	

Comments:

In general, the study programme provides the students with opportunities for further education at doctoral level. The students gain some experience in academic writing while preparing their master's theses and therefore obtain necessary skills to continue their research activity within doctoral studies in Law.

Still, there is some room for improvement regarding both the foreign language skills of the students (inevitably required for advanced scientific research) and their overall experience in academic writing.

- **Recommendation:** It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language (and other foreign languages) skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	

Collected evidence:
- The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) with annexes;
- The tour, the meetings and additional materials presented at the TCUM on 22 May 2015.

General comments:

The students are generally satisfied with their studies and have good informal relationship with the teachers. The ratio between the students and academic staff is favourable. However, there is a consistent lack of international focus. Therefore, it is essential to develop international mobility of the students, of which an important part is the improvement of English language proficiency. Also, the syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in English or French.

In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it is recommended to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to provide more choices to students and make academic mobility more attractive. In order to further support student development, it would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments. Also, a broader involvement of students in research is necessary.

In conclusion, the conduct of the study programme has both strengths and areas of improvement in this assessment area, as described above. Some areas need some significant attention from TCUM and require substantial effort to improve the situation. As a result, the conduct of the study programme fulfils the requirements partially.

Commendations:

- Teaching staff finds time to publish teaching materials for their courses.
- Internship is well organised and the University guarantees the students a place of internship due to specific agreements and/or good cooperation with many companies.
- The ratio between master students and supervisors is favourable.

Recommendations:
- It would be advisable to adopt a more systematic approach towards gathering and processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.
- Syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in

English or French.
- It is recommended to include role play, e.g. moot court in the study process, to provide realistic experience as a prosecutor, attorney, judge, etc.
- In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of public law. Also, students should be provided with internship opportunities abroad.
- It is recommended to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.
- In connection with the recognition of prior learning, consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.
- It is recommended to involve master students in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research).

2.1. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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 a account.**	

Comments:

The study management is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The latter are publicly available on the Internet, e.g. the national database of legal acts, the TCUM's website. The SER and the meetings with the dean, the head of the Department of Law, teaching staff and students showed that the Department of Law conducts regularly surveys regarding learning activities. At the end of each academic year, a meeting is held to discuss the results of surveys and proposals to change the study programme. The process includes foremost teaching staff and students at different levels (Faculty Council, Quality Council and Senate) and apparently also alumni and employers. However, the assessment committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers are actually involved.

- **Recommendation:** It would be advisable to adopt a more systematic approach towards gathering and processing the feedback from the alumni and employers.

2.2. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.**	

Comments:
The SER describes numerous teaching methods, which include both traditional (e.g. lectures) and modern (e.g. seminars, problem solving, group work) teaching methods. The aim of the chosen teaching methods is to orient master students to active learning, including taking responsibility for achieving the learning outcomes. Students are required to read study materials independently and to actively participate in

group discussions, to collectively examine case studies, etc. The meetings with teaching staff and students showed that the study programme and teaching methods are designed and chosen with a view to provide practical knowledge and skills. Students wished that there was more role play, e.g. moot court (at the same time, they told that there is no moot court room).

- **Recommendation**: It would be advisable to consider including more role play as a teaching method into the study process, e.g. moot court.

2.3. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, up-to-date teaching materials are used.	

Comments:

The use of up-to-date teaching materials is inevitable for providing high quality education. It is commendable that teaching staff publishes journal articles and teaching materials for their courses. The SER and the meetings with the leadership and teaching staff confirmed that the drafts of teaching materials are formally reviewed and approved before publication. Teaching staff is well aware of the need to keep up with the changes in legal regulations and recent court practice (including of the European Court of Human Rights).

However, syllabi and meetings with teaching staff showed that a very limited number of foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) is used during the studies. The assessment committee notes that the syllabi contain literature published in Romania or in Russia, but the situation is troubling when it comes to literature in English, French, German, etc.

- **Recommendation:** It is understandable that the study programme focuses on Moldovan law, giving Moldovan sources a priority, but in order to provide wider, a more comparative understanding, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature, especially with regard to the fields of law that are internationally well integrated. For example, Comparative Tax Law and European Union Law inevitably demand foreign legal literature. It is also useful if students worked with authentic texts of treaties or judgments (Romanian versions are usually translations) to improve their foreign legal language skills. The committee saw that the essential legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline) are not available at the University, but there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles. The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known textbooks on human rights, European Union law and international (trade) law in English or in French.

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.	

Comments:

The internship is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The curriculum contains a compulsory five week internship (10 credits). The objectives of internship are defined in the regulation of internship and also available in the blank portfolio of internship which is given to each student performing the internship. Each student is officially assigned to a place of internship, and is appointed a supervisor from the University and a tutor from the place of internship. At the end of internship, students complete a portfolio of internship.

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.

Comments:

The University has agreements or good cooperation with more than 170 companies where the students can perform their internship. Students can also find a place of internship themselves. At the meeting with employers, the latter assured that they are satisfied with the students who have performed their internship with them and they are happy to receive the students also in future. Students expressed satisfaction that the University guarantees them a place of internship. However, they wished there was an opportunity to go for a short internship abroad. The committee learnt that the students who already work can perform their internship at their current workplaces. This opportunity involves a risk - if the current workplace is not related to Public Law, the internship may not achieve its learning outcomes.

- **Recommendation:** In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of public law. Also, students should be provided with internship opportunities abroad.

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.

Comments:

The assessment of learning outcomes is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The assessment as a whole is comprised of interim assessments during the semester and the final assessment at the end of semester. The SER lists different assessment methods which are used depending on the structure, volume and duration of studies. Still, it remains unclear how exactly the assessment methods are chosen and matched to learning outcomes, especially when considering the fact that all courses are of 5 credits and contact hours are quite similar per 1 credit. The SER states that the quality of applied assessment method (e.g. specific questions, tests, exams) are assured by the head of the Department of Law and Studies Department. If they are not subject matter experts, it is questionable, how do they assess and ensure the substantial quality questions, tests, exams, etc. in question. The committee found no evidence whether students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

- **Recommendation**: It would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance in order to support student development.

2.7. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.**	

Comments:

The recognition of prior learning and work experience is mainly regulated by national normative documents. The meetings showed that there is confusion at the University level as to what the recognition of prior learning and work experience actually means. The assessment committee was interested if students can transfer the credits earned, individual courses taken in other Moldovan or foreign higher education institutions at master's or higher level to the TCUM as part of their studies at the TCUM. The committee understands that according to national regulation, work experience is recognised only in the framework of vocational higher education. It seems that necessary regulation is in place, but there is little actual experience. Recognition of prior learning is closely connected to academic mobility, i.e. if the credits earned during academic mobility are recognised without unduly difficulties, students have one more incentive to take advantage of academic mobility.

- **Recommendation**: The Department of Law should consider the possibility to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It provides more choices to students, but also increases the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility and therefore again makes academic mobility more attractive.

2.8. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.**	

Comments:

The evaluation of study process has clearly defined purposes and its results are used to improve curriculum, courses, teaching methods etc., and to select teaching staff. There are several organs or officials who are involved in the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes, e.g. Department of Law, Dean, Methodological and Scientific Council, Committee for Quality Assurance, Senate and Vice-rector for didactic activity and quality assurance. The SER and meetings showed that the teaching staff and students are asked for feedback and their feedback is considered by the appropriate organs and officials. The committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers also participate in the evaluation of study process. If they are not involved, the Department of Law should involve them as they can provide useful feedback. There is a separate measure to assess the success of master's theses: the chairmen of master's theses defence committees prepare reports in which they analyse how learning outcomes were achieved and make recommendations for improvement measures.

2.9. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.	

Comments:

Each student has a supervisor appointed by the Department of Law. When considering the number of teaching staff and students, the ratio is favourable (see criteria 3.3 of the Report) and students should thus receive adequate supervision. Students have the freedom to choose the topics for their master's theses. The meetings with students and alumni showed that they were satisfied with supervision. Master students are encouraged to participate in scientific conferences and to publish scientific articles. The meetings with students and alumni showed that students actually participate in conferences and publish articles (sometimes with their supervisors).

However, the committee found no evidence that students are involved in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research), e.g. participating in a research project led by a member of teaching staff. True, there are examples where professors and students/alumni have co-authored a publication. In the SER, "Participation in the institutional research projects" is listed as one of the strengths. The SER does not specify in which research projects the Department of Law participates, but it should find ways to involve master students in current or future research projects.

- **Recommendation:** Master students should be involved in broader research and development activities.

3. TEACHING STAFF	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	

Collected evidence:
- Self-evaluation report (SER);
- Annexes of SER;
- Internal regulations;
- Additional documents received during the site visit;
- Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.

General comments:

The academic staff is experienced and well qualified. The research activities of the teaching staff are systematically planned and monitored. However, there is a clear lack of international focus. The international experience of teaching staff should be encouraged and more visiting staff involved in the teaching process.

Although in general the study programme meets the criteria set, at least at the formal level, taken into consideration the fact that some of the indicators need more substantial compliance, it is prudent to conclude that, although the conformity seems to be plenary, the requirements for the teaching staff are fulfilled partially.

Commendations:

- Good qualification of the teaching staff.

Recommendations:

- The methodological training of the teaching staff should be continuous and more systematic. Teaching competence should be considered as one of the performance indicators of the staff;
- It is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers;
- It is recommended for teaching staff to gain more international experience, also outside Romania;
- More visiting teaching staff should be involved in the teaching process;
- It is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers. Self-improvement of teaching staff should be more substantial and result-oriented and involve more members of academic staff.

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:

From Annex B15. it appears that the programme is taught by 8 teaching staff members, out of which 6 are full-time (75%). All of the full-time staff have a PhD degree in law (5) or economic sciences (1). It can be concluded that the number and qualification of full-time teaching staff conforms to the requirements established by legislation.

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:

According to SER, the age average of full-time staff is around 45 years. The oldest staff member is 54 years old and the youngest is 39. At medium term the programme's sustainability can be ensured.

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.	

Comments:

From the SER and CV's it appears that the qualification of the teaching staff is adequate to disciplines taught. In terms of workload and supervised students, it appears from the SER that the supervision workload is around 2-4 students per member of teaching staff at this particular master's programme. However, despite the fact that the academics involved in this study programme are not involved in other MA programmes, they are still involved in the bachelor's programme, which means that the total number of supervised students is around 7-8 per each member of the academic staff, as per discussions and information gathered during the visit. In 2014, 10 students were admitted to the master programme, which allows the teachers to use quite an individual approach. This information confirms to the committee that the workload of the teaching staff is sufficient and adequate for achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

3.4. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.	

Comments:

From the SER it appears that members of the teaching staff have adequate teaching competence. At the same time, the SER stipulates that members of teaching staff have attended various scientific events, thus allowing them to improve their research and teaching methods. At the visit evidences of these participations were made available (certificates of attendance, proofs of participation). Still, due to the fact that not all of members of the teaching staff attended those trainings and scientific events, there is room for improvement. Although the teachers' performance is regularly evaluated, even more attention should be paid to the consistency of the methodological training of the teaching staff.

- **Recommendation:** The methodological training of the teaching staff should be continuous and systematic. Teaching competence should be considered as one of the performance indicators of the staff.

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.**	

Comments:

The SER stipulates that a strategic planning of continuing education is in place, assuring thus opportunities for staff improvement. Continuing training of the teachers is done based on continuing training plan for five years, and a continuing training plan for one year and is carried out in institutions within the country and abroad. At the visit, evidences of the information presented in the SER were provided (participation in trainings within other institutions, study visits etc). The academic staff confirmed that once in 4 years, everyone has the opportunity to go for self-development courses in the Academy of Sciences. The study visits are also approved as self-development. However, most of those opportunities are used in Moldova, Romania and other post-soviet countries.

Concerning other staff development activities besides continuing education, the committee was informed that the University has implemented a quality management system. However, the committee did not receive any evidence concerning the broader staff development plan, including conducting systematic appraisal interviews with the staff and other methods of staff development.

- **Recommendation**: It is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers. Cooperation with HEI-s from other countries, in particular from Western-European countries would also be useful for the development of the teaching staff.

3.6. REQUIREMENT: **Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.**	

Comments:
There are no visiting members within the teaching staff, except for one Professor, specialist in law from the University Virgili and Rovira in

Tarragona city, Spain, who will give some lectures in 2015 within a mobility scheme. The institution is at the moment confusing full-time members of teaching staff that also act as legal professionals, and visiting staff.

- **Recommendation**: More visiting teaching staff (foreign professors, (local) practitioners etc) should be involved in teaching on the Public Law study programme.

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.**	

Comments:

From Annex B17 it appears that most of members of teaching staff were involved in training sessions at foreign institutions, mostly from Romania, at least at a planning level. At the visit, evidences of the real participations at these sessions for teaching staff members involved in the MA programme, in accordance with the forecast established under annex B17, were provided. However, due to the fact that only a limited number of staff actually attended those sessions, and most of them took place in Romania. Thus, there is a remarkable room for improvement. Also, there is no real systematic and substantial participation in international academic networks, only some sporadic memberships in some professional associations some years ago, for a few members of the teaching staff was reported by the teaching staff during the interviews at the assessment visit.

- **Recommendation**: The international experience for teaching staff should be increased also outside Romania. In order to achieve that, it is advisable to promote academic mobility among the teaching staff and actively seek opportunities to participate in international cooperation.

3.8. REQUIREMENT: **Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.**	

Comments:

The SER mentions the involvement of some members of the teaching staff in different research and development projects. However, there is no real relation between those projects and the disciplines taught by the relevant participants. Still, it can be commended that those projects could have a real impact for the development of the master's programme as they develop specific research skills for the academics involved in those projects. Also, from annexes provided and information gathered at the visit, it appears that members of the academic staff have attended various conferences abroad and in Moldova, which has led to the publication of some scientific materials.

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

Comments:

The SER stipulates that the research activity of each member of the academic staff is planned and monitored, as each of the academics has to fill in every year an individual work plan, with planned research results, which become part of the Department's yearly plan. The real achievement of such results is being monitored by the head of the Department, based on reports and evidences provided by each member of the teaching staff. At the visit, proofs of individual plan for teachers, as well as reports by head of Department and other relevant evidences were provided.

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

Collected evidence:
- Self-evaluation report (SER);
- Annexes of SER;
- Internal regulations;
- Additional documents received during the site visit;
- Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.

General comments:

Although the assessment committee was pleased to meet many satisfied students who all assured the positive image of TCUM, there is also plenty of room for improvements. Main argument for regarding the decision to assess the area as partially conforms to requirements was insufficient academic mobility (internal and external).

To further support the students, TCUM should establish an effective study counselling system for the students, and also consider providing them with some kind of a psychological counselling service. Also, students should be better informed about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encouraged to take advantage of such possibilities. A formal system of detecting academic fraud should be established in the University.

Commendations:

- Students' suggestions and feedback is considered a valuable input to the University and the faculty;
- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high;
- Graduates are competitive and able to find specific jobs in the labour market.

Recommendations:

- TCUM should establish an effective study counselling system for the students, and also consider providing them with some kind of a psychological counselling service. Also, students should be better informed about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encouraged to take advantage of such possibilities.
- The faculty should encourage their master students to participate in academic mobility and to focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities (for example classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility);
- In order to help the University in its internationalization (and academic mobility) processes, the University (and also faculty) should consider updating and revising their webpage's content in English in order to attract foreign students;
- The University (and also faculty) should seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, masters seminars etc);
- The faculty should seek ways how to formally strengthen their ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- The faculty should try to find a way to decrease the dropout rate of their students.

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.**	

Comments:

In general, the admission requirements for students in the study programme Public Law are in accordance with the normative acts and are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme.

The admission requirements are established by the national legal framework (Government Decision no 1455 of 24.12.2007 on the organisation of the Master studies). No internal regulation regarding the specific admission requirements to the Public Law study programme have been identified on the University's website or among the annexes to SER.

The national admission criteria include a specialty exam and evaluation of the IT and foreign language skills (English/French**). Regarding the general lack of foreign language skills among the master students encountered by the committee, a question can be raised whether the**

language test serves its purpose adequately or is there some room for improvement.	
4.2. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.**	

Comments:

According to the SER, there is a formalized system in place for study and career counselling for students that was also confirmed by the Dean. However, the discussions with the students and the alumni did not confirm the effectiveness of such a system. There appears to be a lack of awareness or interest regarding the possible counselling opportunities among the students. The students associate the career counselling system mainly with the internship places the University is offering them. Study counselling system is regarded as a possibility to ask for advice from the teachers in an informal manner. The committee received no evidence about an effective psychological counselling system in TCUM. According to SER, it should be the task of the tutors to provide the students with psychological and professional support.

Although the creation of Juridical Consultancy Centre, which also offers free of charge legal consultation for people outside TCUM is highly positive, there seems to be a lack of information among the students regarding other counselling services.

- **Recommendation:** TCUM should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students. Also, students should be better informed about the already existing counselling services TCUM is offering, and encouraged to take advantage of such possibilities.

4.3. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.**	

Comments:

In 2012, TCUM joined the mobility program ERASMUS MUNDUS and is also a partner in the EMINENCE and EMINENCE II project, which involves altogether 20 universities from which 5 are located in the European Union. Therefore, students are provided with external mobility opportunities.

- **Recommendation:** There are not so many opportunities for internal mobility, so TCUM should consider co-operation with other Moldovan universities, to offer students optional subjects from other universities.

4.4. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.**	

Comments:

SER and the interviews confirmed with the Dean, the students and alumni confirmed that the students' participation in international mobility programs is almost non-existent. According to the students they are usually informed about the existing mobility possibilities but the duration of Master studies is to short, and also the costs of participation are too high. However, the students still expressed the opinion that it is necessary to go for at least a short internship abroad.

- **Recommendation:** It is understandable that students at the masters level, who already have started their professional career, tend to be less prone to academic mobility, yet the faculty should still put in more effort to inform their students about the mobility opportunities and to encourage them to participate in those mobility programs e.g. using joint courses etc. with foreign institutions. Also, more attention should be paid to developing the students' English language proficiency.

4.5. REQUIREMENT: **Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.**	

Comments:

As stated in the SER and also confirmed during the interviews, students are involved in the decision-making processes at various levels of the University – at the institutional level, the Students' Senate, at the faculty level, the Students' Faculty Council, and at the group level, a head of the group is elected. The students are also represented in the TCUM Senate. Furthermore, the students are not only formally involved but they also assured the committee that the management of the faculty and the University considers their feedback and also implements their suggestions, e.g. regarding the possible changes in the curriculum.

4.6. REQUIREMENT: **A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.**	

Comments:

In April, 2015, the TCUM Code of Ethics was approved, containing a distinct chapter on anti-plagiarism. Currently, TCUM is using an anti-plagiarism system antiplagia.ro and is looking for a program of institutional anti-plagiarism. During the assessment visit, it was revealed that in many cases the discovery of plagiarism lies upon academic staff (for example theses' supervisors), who also warn the students about the consequences of academic fraud.

Recommendation: A special course, which would guide the students to avoid plagiarism and also teach them good academic ethics, should be considered.

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

Comments:

Although the SER stated that the institution has a database, which periodically tracks their graduates' professional development, it could not be confirmed during the interviews. The graduates claimed to actively communicate with some of the faculties staff but these connections seemed to be rather informal than formal.

- **Recommendation:** The graduates can give valuable feedback and contacts to the faculty and therefore TCUM should be more proactive in regards of keeping in touch with their alumni. Faculty might consider organising annual events, seminars or networking meetings with their graduates since they might provide valuable information and connections to the faculty. Also collecting feedback from graduates could be more systematic – some of the graduates claimed not to have had the opportunity to give feedback about their studies after graduating.

4.8. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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:

According to SER, the unemployment rate of the graduates is below 10% (8,43%), which - considering the general situation of the Republic of Moldova on these issues – is a relatively good result. About 65% of the graduates of the Public Law study programme are working in coherence with their obtained qualification – this is a solid number but the faculty might want to gain more insights about those 26% of graduates who are not employed in the areas they studied. In general the study programme prepares skilled and competitive students to enter the labour market.

4.9. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.**	

Comments:

According to the SER, there is a well-defined system in place for monitoring academic progress that is based on a solid national and institutional legal framework (Law on Education, the Guide of national implementation of ECTS, Regulation organization of higher education studies based on SNCS, Regulation on organization and development of the teaching progress within TCUM, applying National Study Credit System).

The documents presented to the committee demonstrated an unusually high average grade of the students. Here, a question might be raised whether the grading system is adequate in its current form for effectively measuring the performance of the students or should it be somewhat modified and improved in order to really support the development of the students.

The SER states that the dropout rate of the master students is 16.65%. The abandonment is allegedly caused mainly by the social and economic problems of the society: migration abroad and the lack of financial resources to pay for the studies. Although it is understandable that the relatively high dropout rate is mostly caused by external factors, the assessment committee encourages the faculty to further investigate those problems and try to seek measures to decrease the dropout rate.

- **Recommendation**: The faculty should try to find a way, how to decrease the dropout rate of their students.

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	

Collected evidence:
- Self-evaluation report;
- Annexes of SER;
- Site visit tour to the library and facilities, including study rooms;
- Interviews with management, teaching staff and students.

General comments:

The financial resources available for the master's programme implementation are substantially sufficient and conform to the main requirements. The budget planning in general is sustainable. However, the trend is that the numbers of students and financial resources are slightly decreasing, which might pose some risk to financial sustainability. Also, the student numbers have been quite volatile over the years.
It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the library and support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students. In order to make the study programme more attractive to students, a clearer focus is necessary, as described under criteria 1.7.

The classrooms are equipped sufficiently, the equipment is renewed periodically. However, there is still room for the improvement, in particular, in part of library's equipment and further development of ICT solutions.

There is almost no foreign literature at the library in the field of law. The books available are rather out-dated. When replenishing the library, attention should be paid to the modern sources of information, especially investing in international academic databases and training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. At the University, access should be enabled to legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline, BeckOnline etc). In the study processes, the use of such databases should be promoted, as there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles.

Commendations:

- The classrooms are equipped sufficiently and the equipment is renewed periodically.
- Widespread use of *Moodle* platform providing the students information regarding the courses online.

Recommendations:
- The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German.
- It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.
- The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable.

| 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. | |

Comments:

According to SER, the income and expenses of TCUM are approved annually by the Board of Directors of TCUM. The financial resources of TCUM come from the tuition fees, research projects, sponsorships and other sources of legal incomes. The dynamics of TCUM income and expenditure (for 2010-2014) is presented in (B18.1), the trend is that the numbers are slightly decreasing. During the years 2010 to 2014, the revenues have decreased by approximately 16%, but so have the expenditures by approximately 19%, meaning that the deficit has disappeared

over the years.

Thus, despite of the slight decrease, the numbers presented in SER can be considered adequate for conducting studies and development activities.

5.2. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.**	

<u>Comments:</u>

Over the years 2010 – 2014, the budget has been dropping (see criteria 5.1). Still, despite of the slight decrease, the numbers presented in SER clearly show the sustainable character of the budget planning. The policy of TCUM has been to gradually reduce tuition fees and provide individual approach to the students, offering them a range of facilities and exemptions of the tuition fee.

The trends of admission and graduation of students per each year are presented below:

YEARS	ADMISSION	GRADUATION
2009-2011	17	16
2010-2012	5	5
2011-2013	21	16
2012-2014	12	9
2013-2015	21	16
2014-2016	10	

The number of students has been relatively volatile, decreasing from 1937 in 2010 to 1481 in 2014 (see also admissions and graduations on the Public Law programme under criteria 4.9). TCUM is aware of this issue and the Dean underlined that bad socio-economic conditions of Moldova has to be taken into account. The enrolment plan is approved annually together with the Ministry of Education and the founder. Another factor influencing the drop in master level student numbers is the fact that a lot of cycle 1 graduates from TCUM shall be employees in cooperatives in the villages in Moldova and therefore are unable to take part in master studies. It was stressed that according to the new Educational Code, reduced attendance classes shall be allowed and TCUM is planning to enrol a larger number of bachelor degree graduates who are excited about this possibility. Also, 2 years ago a decision was taken by the government that a master's degree is necessary for career growth, that should attract more students.

- **Recommendation:** It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability.
- In order to make the study programme more attractive to students, a clearer focus is necessary, as described under criteria 1.7.

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.).

Comments:

According to SER, TCUM is composed of 3 study buildings and the total area of the University is 7041.1 m^2, including the area for teaching and research (4610.1 m^2). Full-time students take advantage of 1.78 m^2 per person in the classroom, 2.52 m^2 in the auditoriums for seminars and 4.28 m^2 in the specialized laboratories. The information obtained during the assessment visit allows the committee to believe that there is sufficient space for conducting modern teaching and the classrooms (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories) are equipped sufficiently and the equipment is renewed periodically. The computing centres and computer classes are available for students for independent work. The rooms are equipped with computers and projectors.

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.

Comments:
There appears to be a sufficient number of computers. ICT devices are available for both faculty members and students. The computer rooms look in general modern and meet the contemporary standards. The staff and the students are motivated to use ICT techniques, only the availability and the knowledge of faculty members regarding electronic databases should be increased. The positive trend is the widespread use of *Moodle* platform providing the students information regarding the courses online.

- **Recommendation**: The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable.

5.5. REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.

Comments:
According to SER, TCUM has 2 hostels for students with a total surface of 5188.4 m^2 and 607 seats. One of the hostels is of sections type. TCUM

Health Service operates under Regulation on the organization and functioning of the medical service at TCUM (B) and is guided by the methodological Family Medical Center (FMC) No.3 of Chisinau.   Medical service has 2 halls with a total area of 38.8 m^2, inclusively a treatment room 21.7 m^2 and is equipped with the necessary equipment for providing the first aid. Annually the University purchases medicines and materials necessary for the medical service activity.

5.6. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.**	

<u>Comments:</u>
The library has three reading rooms (reading room, two rooms for home tutorials) with the total area of 79.9 m2. In the reading rooms there are 70 seats. The Book Fund of TCUM Scientific Library comprises 65,471 volumes, with 10310 titles of documents, covering both compulsory and optional bibliography of all subjects taught at the University, as well as research needs of the University. The library has 19 computers connected to the Internet. The library has implemented the Electronic Catalogue of all incoming documents and a Digital Library with database of the teaching and scientific materials, of the teachers which are in the electronic format, in which currently are stored 1035 documents, 9 databases (Consortium of Electronic Resources in Moldova, MoldLex). There is almost no foreign literature in the field of law. The books available are rather out-dated. The visit to the library proved that the literature in the field is inadequate and needs fundamental strategic re-planning. The students and academic staff are not aware of international databases and therefore not motivated to use the few available. Also the librarians need training to give advice to the students on how to access electronic academic materials.

- **Recommendation**: The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German. The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable. The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources.