

**REPORT
OF
EXTERNAL EVALUATION
FOR STYDY PROGRAM
“PHD IN EUROPEAN CONTRACTS RIGHT”
IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY “ALBANIAN UNIVERSITY”**

Tiranë, Nëntor 2016

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonilda Pajaziti', is written in a cursive style across the bottom right of the page.

PREAMBLE

I. PRINCIPLES OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESS

- *The External evaluation is an evidence –based process carried out by independent External evaluation Group (EEG)*
- *Information provided by the Higher Education Institution (HEI) is assumed to be factually correct, unless other evidence points the contrary.*
- *The external evaluation is a process of verification of the information provided (mainly by Self Evaluation Report (SER) and the exploration of any matters which are omitted from that documentation.*
- *The level of conformity that is expected is “substantial compliance”, not rigid adherence.*

II. KEY FEATURES OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESS

- *Management of process must be completely independent from the HEI itself*
- *All parts of the process must be transparent (easily open to examination by the APAAL and Accreditation Council).*
- *The Report must be sufficiently detailed to provide satisfactory assurance of the robustness of the external evaluation*
- *The report must provide sufficient, verified information which clearly shows that the criteria have been met*

III. STAGES OF EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

External Evaluation consists of several stages:

- Approval of the request of the HEI, and establishing timelines Evaluation.
- Decision of PAAHE, for External Evaluation Group (EEG) members and the timeframe of the External Evaluation.
- Establishing the External Evaluation Group (EEG)
- Informing the institution under evaluation about the timeframe of the external evaluation to take place and about the composition of the EEG;
- Contracting the members of the EEG;
- Training the EEG from the PAAHE staff, to help the EEG get to know the Self- Evaluation folder and the raise discussion. Compiling the working plan;
- Preparing of EEG for the site visits to the HEIs;
- Visits of EEG to the HEI;
- Compilation of the Draft of External Evaluation Report by the EEG;
- Send the Draft of External Evaluation Report to the HEI under evaluation;
- Compilation of the Final External Evaluation Report and submission to PAAHE.

IV. CONTENT OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT (EER)

EER should contain 12 main sections (points). Each section (required to be analyzed) may consist of three parts:

- Description Part
- Measurable indicators part (data, tables, along with Annexes).
- Assessment, according to the Standards



In the description part, according to the Terms of References, the Experts describe the relevant section. In the part of measurable indicators, EER will contain quantitative data, tables, etc., which prove the descriptions. Finally, in the part of assessment, according to quality standards, EER will include specific responses for each criterion/standard¹, and whether it is **fulfilled** or **not**.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT
FOR STUDY PROGRAM: "PHD IN EUROPEAN CONTRACTS RIGHT"

Table licensing data for the study program:		
1	HEI applying:	Private University "Albanian University"
2	Faculty who offers:	Faculty of Social Science
3	Decision of Accreditation Council /Order of Ministry of Education and Sport, for licensing of program	DAC Nr. 348, date 13.07.2012 Order of MoES Nr. 564 date 19.11.2012, amended with Order of MoES 380, date 09.06.2013
4	Title of the study program:	PHD IN EUROPEAN CONTRACTS RIGHT" (*)
5	Study cycle:	Third Cycle
6	Duration of the study program:	Three years
7	ECTS in first year:	60 ECTS
8	Form of study (fulltime/part time/in distance/):	lacking in the Order of licensing
9	Language (albanian/other):	lacking in the Order of licensing
10	The program is offered by the institution	YES
11	The program is offered in cooperation with other institutions	YES (**)
12	Joint Diploma:	NO
13	Double Diploma:	NO
14	Level of NQF	eight
15	Date of activate	March 2013
16	The first generation of issuing diplomas	Yet
	etj	

The table above was filled by APAAL

(*) At DAC Nr. 348, dated 13.07.2012, the name of the program has two variants: the title is "European contracts right ", while on page 2, the decision is "European **and** contracts right"

In Order of MAS Nr. 564 dated 19.11.2012, amended by Order of MAS 380, datw 09/06/2013, the name is "European **and** contracts right"

(**) In Order of MAS Nr. 564 dated 19.11.2012, amended by Order of MAS 380, datw 09/06/2013:

- II. Programs of study [...] last for at least 3 academic years and include 60 credits for organized theoretical studies, of which at least 15 credits theoretical realized by foreign lecturers, with academic qualifications required for third cycle studies [...]
- III. University "Albanian University" will implement these programs in collaboration with the University of Pisa (University of Pisa) and the University of Palermo (Universita degli Studi di Palermo), Italy, by bilateral agreement, concluded between Higher Education Institutions.



¹ State quality Standards, approved by Order of Minister of education and science, in 2011

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the visit to Albanian University (AU) which took place on 10-11 October 2016. All meetings took place as provided for in the following agenda:

Date 10.10.2016

Time	Planned Activities
9. ³⁰ – 10. ³⁰	Meeting with the Head of the Institution, Dean of the Faculty/Doctorate schools
10. ³⁰ – 12. ⁰⁰	Meeting with the Self Evaluation Group (questions and discussion about the self evaluation report)
12. ⁰⁰ – 13. ⁰⁰	Meeting with the Council of Professors and Scientific Committee of the doctoral program
13. ⁰⁰ – 13. ³⁰	Coffee Break
13. ³⁰ – 15. ⁰⁰	Meeting with the Internal Quality Assurance Unit
15. ⁰⁰ – 16. ⁰⁰	Observing the facilities (auditorium, laboratories, library and other services for the students etc.)

Date 11.10.2016

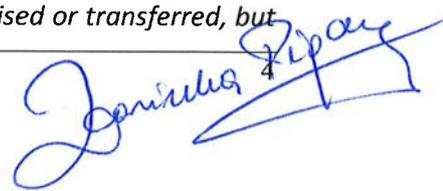
Time	Planned Activities
09. ⁰⁰ – 11. ⁰⁰	Meeting and interviews with the students.
11. ⁰⁰ – 13. ⁰⁰	Meeting with the academic staff (full time and part time) of the study programme, academic advisors of the doctoral students
13. ⁰⁰ – 13. ³⁰	Coffee Break
13. ³⁰ – 16. ⁰⁰	Meeting / site visit at the teaching secretary, human resources office and the office of curricula.
16. ⁰⁰ – 16. ³⁰	Final meeting with the Head of the Institution

The Doctoral Study Programme "European Contract Law" (hereinafter referred to as the DSP) is a new study programme at AU licensed with order No. 56 of 19 November 2012 of the Ministry of Education and Sports of Republic of Albania. This is a third cycle programme. The Bachelor Programme (Legal Studies) has been accredited with Order of Ministry of Education No. 541 of 1 December 2010 and this accreditation is valid until 1 December 2016 (source: website of APAAL). This DSP was initially conceptualized as a doctoral school, but following the order of the Ministry of Education suspending new registrations to doctoral programmes, it was reorganized and anchored as a DSP with the Department of Law, Faculty of Social Sciences of Albanian University.

On 08.11.2016 the Draft External Evaluation Report (EER) was sent to the University. The university sent their response for the draft report on 16.11.2016, nr. 53/85 Prot.

The experts read the university response and submitted the following response to the comments of the HEI on the Draft Evaluation Report:

1. The comment concerning the credits from the School of Magistrates is accepted. Therefore, the sentence on pg. 5 of the Draft Report "In this context, the SER mentions also credits that are granted 'in the framework of the School of Magistrates' as credits that may be recognised or transferred, but



it is not clear what is the legal basis for this given that the DSP Regulation does not explicitly mention this” changes into “In this context, the SER mentions also credits that are granted ‘in the framework of the School of Magistrates’ as credits that may be recognised or transferred”. Also conclusion no.5 on pg. 7 of the draft report becomes “The SER mentions also credits granted ‘in the framework of the School of Magistrates’ as credits that may be recognised or transferred. This is in line with legislation applicable to the DSP.”

The comment concerning the strategies of the DSP does not clarify the ambiguity of these strategies, hence it is not accepted and no changes are made to the draft report.

Concerning the two inactive students, the report does not change; the same findings and recommendations remain in force.

2. Comment 2 on the Council of Professors does not provide further specific information that may correct the findings of the site visit. This comment is not accepted and as a result the findings and recommendations in the draft report concerning the composition and chair of the Council of Professors remain the same.

3. Comment 3 concerning the library cannot be accepted because the facts mentioned there were not evident during the site visit. Thus the findings and recommendations in the draft report remain the same.

4. As far as comment 4 is concerned: the involvement of the students in teaching activities of Albanian University is acknowledged in the draft report, as well as their participation in some conferences, thus the findings and recommendations remain the same.

5. In regard to comment 5 on language certificates: the draft report and its recommendations assess the situation in the HEI in light of legislation in force which requires doctoral students to submit a language certificate at the moment of application to the doctoral programme or within one year from enrolment. Notwithstanding the practice of other HEI, this requirement has not been fulfilled. The same applies to the average grade for one doctoral student: his application and admission is assessed in light of legal requirements in force. For these reasons, the findings and recommendations in the report remain the same.

MEMBERS OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION GROUP (EEG)

Dr. Darinka Piqani

The external evaluation group is composed of Dr. Darinka Piqani, Assistant Professor of European Union Law, Leiden University (the Netherlands).

The EEG was assisted by program officer Msc Renata Qatipi, from PAAHE/APAAL.



MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION OF DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAMS

1. Mission and objectives of doctoral study program

Description part

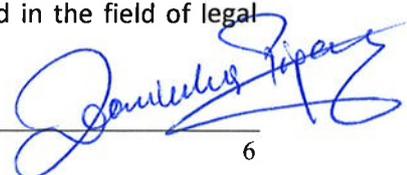
Terms of reference: *Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: aims and objectives of the study program and scientific research, strategies in the short, medium and long terms, the number of students over the years, study programs of third cycle, HEI place (in the national and international contest).*

In the meeting with the Rector of the University, it emerged that there has been no study of the labor market as such, but the setting up of this DSP was based on the following indicators: a) requests from students interested in an academic career and research and b) an internal evaluation within the University showing that there is a need for academic staff and researchers holding a doctoral title given the number of licensed private Universities in the Republic of Albania. The Rector mentioned the high number of applicants for the DSP-s and the need for a strict selection.

According to the SER and Art. 7 of the DSP Regulation, the mission of the DSP is to advance to the highest level possible the research capacities of doctoral students in the field of European Contract Law so as to be able to respond to the actual needs of academic research in the Republic of Albania. The objectives of this DSP are to develop and advance independent research skills of doctoral students and to equip them with advanced methodologies in the field of consumer contractual law, commercial contracts, electronic commerce, new types of employment contracts, and all this from a perspective of European Union Law (EU law). During the meeting with the Rector and other administrative units linked to the DSP it was emphasized that the need to focus on the European dimension of contract law derives from the actual context of relations between the Republic of Albania and the European Union, namely Albania's status as a candidate country and the need to approximate domestic law with EU law. The focus of the programme is clearly academic: according to Art. 9 of the DSP Regulation, with the completion of this programme, students will have the possibility to start their career as researchers, lecturers, developers of study programmes and projects in law.

According to the SER one of the short term strategies of the DSP is "the need for legal organization of the contractual right [...] at the national level, as the period in which we live is confronted with dissolution of the national codes, as consequence of distribution of sectoral norms a result of implementing the community directives." Similarly, the SER identifies as a possible mid-term strategy the development of scientific research, that is "problematic in the field of contractual right at national and international level and its fields" and "preparation of doctorate students thanks to scientific research, continued increase of theoretical level and stimulating the work groups" This will be possible because the doctoral students will be involved "in knowing the legislative processes, best practices of legislation drafting, problematic evaluation, innovations and best international experiences in the field of contractual right [...]" (SER, pg. 9-10).

As far as long term strategies are concerned, the DSP aims at "adaptability of the study program with the need and work market" and improving "the collaboration with national and international research institutions aiming the development of scientific research and professional development of the students through research work. Another important objective of The Doctorate Study Program in "European Contracts Right" is also the public presentation of doctorates scientific research in national and international well known magazines as well as in international scientific events." (SER, pg. 10). These strategies of the DSP are in line with the overall strategy of AU, namely improving the quality of teaching and "turning the University to an expert center specialized in the field of legal science" (SER, pg. 10).



However, it is recommended to have a clearer definition of these strategies; often they are confusing, overlapping and not clearly defined: the legal organization of contractual law seems to fit better as a long- term strategy as the Albanian legal system may benefit from research output of this DSP; on the other hand preparation of doctoral students may be better suited as a short term strategy; furthermore, it is not clear what is meant with “the adaptability of the study programme with the need and work market”.

The DSP is conceptualized as study programme of three years with the possibility of one year extension granted on a decision of the Council of Professors (Art. 28 of the DSP). The first year of studies is a theoretical year, organized in two semesters, at the end of which doctoral students must obtain 60 ECTS (1500 teaching hours). According to Art. 23 of the DSP Regulation, credits obtained in the framework of the Post Graduate School (SHPU) or Master of Second Level (MND) may be recognised partially or fully for the purposes of the first year of the DSP. In this context, the SER mentions also credits that are granted ‘in the framework of the School of Magistrates’ as credits that may be recognised or transferred. Apart from the obligation of obtaining these credits, doctoral students must also pass a general/ theoretical exam at the end of the first year. If the doctoral student fails to obtain the required number of credits or does not pass the theoretical exam, the HEI is obliged to provide him/her with a certificate, which lists the modules, credits obtained and the evaluation. The other two years of the DSP presuppose that doctoral students focus on the conceptualization, research and writing of their doctoral thesis. They also participate in academic conferences and publish their research. (See Arts. 22, 23 and 25 of the DSP Regulation)

In the academic year 2013-2014 there were five students enrolled in the DSP. At the time of the site visit, the total number of students *de facto* enrolled in the third year of the DSP and attending it, is three (see also Decision No. 212 of 17 June 2015, Council of Professors of Albanian University). This is in line with Art. 17(2) of the DSP Regulation, which determines a minimum threshold of three doctoral students. However, the situation of the other two students is not clear and it is recommended that immediate measures are taken in this regard.

Teaching at the DSP should be performed by academic staff holding the title of “Professor”, “Associate professor” and “Doctor” or “PhD” obtained at a University abroad. The same requirements apply to doctoral thesis supervisors. Teaching staff may be internal or visiting. During the first theoretical year in the academic year 2013-2014, teaching staff included five Professors, one Associate Professor and two Doctors. Two of the professors were visiting staff from the University of Palermo. Courses taught by these two foreign professors amounted to 16 ECTS, as required by legislation in force. According to Art. 15 of the DSP Regulation teaching staff has the obligation to implement the DSP regulation, to conduct the teaching programme according to the DSP Regulation and other regulation of the Department, and to evaluate students in an objective and professional way without discrimination.

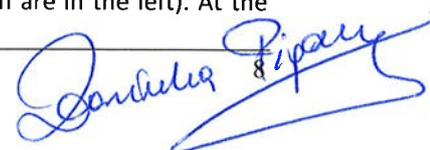
- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
 - ✓ Regulation of the DSP
 - ✓ Data on applications to the DSP academic year 2013-2014
 - ✓ Decision No. 1 of 4 March 2013, Council of Professors of AU
 - ✓ Decision of 15 March 2013, Committee for the Assessment of Applicants to the Doctoral Study Programmes
 - ✓ Decision of 4 March 2013, Committee for the Assessment of Applicants to the Doctoral Study Programmes
 - ✓ Decision No. 313 of 5 May 2014, Council of Professors of AU
 - ✓ Decision No. 313/1 f 5 May 2014, Council of Professors of AU
 - ✓ Decision No. 212 of 17 June 2015, Council of Professors of AU
 - ✓ Syllabus DSP European Contract Law



Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards ²
<p>Standard I.1 - General framework</p> <p>Criterion 1 The study program of third cycle (doctorate) is a new program or a reorganized program;</p> <p>Criterion 2 If it is reorganized, the extent to which it affected the previous program;</p> <p>Criterion 3 The total number of students studying how doctor eight and number of those who attend this study program each year is in line with the policies of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) where the program is conducted as well as state policy for higher education and scientific research regarding recognition and validation of diploma and number of students studying for doctorate to one scientific mentor;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Doctorate study program is supported by national or international research groups accredited for research in relevant field or fields of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Internal evaluation report of study program of the third cycle is reviewed by the Council of Professors.</p>	<p>The DSP complies with this Standard for the following reasons:</p> <p>The DSP is a new programme. At the beginning there were five students enrolled in the DSP and at the time of the site visit there were three active doctoral students. This is in line with Art. 17(2) of the DSP Regulation, which determines a minimum threshold of three students. The situation of the other two students is not clear and it is recommended that immediate measures are taken in this regard. AU has concluded various institutional cooperation agreements that may support the DSP. One could mention, as most relevant, the agreements with the following partners: Tirana Court (advancing the practical dimension of research); Sigmund Freud University (Vienna); University of Aquila; "Luigj Gurakuqi" University, Shkoder; University of Palermo and University of Pisa. From the study programme and from coversations with staff and doctoral students during the site visit, it seems that cooperation with the University of Palermo has been the most fruitful one with two professors of law from that University teaching at the DSP. There is no evidence of support from more specialized national or international research networks in the specific areas of European Contract Law. Also, it is recommended that cooperation is not limited only to teaching by foreign professors but it should extend to exchange of doctoral students or academic staff.</p> <p>According to Art. 46 of the DSP Regulation, every three years, the DSP conducts an internal self- evaluation. This is neither explicitly listed in the tasks of the Council of Professors (see Art. 11 of the DSP Regulation) nor in Art. 46 of the DSP Regulation which refers to the internal self evaluation report. The regulation should be amended accordingly and this obligation should be enforced. Furthermore, apart from the self-evaluation report drafted for the purpose of the present evaluation process, there is no evidence of a separate self-evaluation report of the DSP. The IQAU has drafted a progress report of the DSP and the 2015-2016 Annual Evaluation Report on Quality Assurance (HEI Annual Report). The latter report refers to the HEI as a whole. The SER states that "In the regulation</p>

² EEG must writing for the fulfillment of each standard (based on the criterions which are in the left). At the end of their, need to write his opinions (summary), if is fulfill the standards or not.



of the doctoral study program he asks to Professors' Council to review the report of the internal evaluation of doctoral study programs. This internal evaluation report was reviewed and approved by the Council of Professors of "Albanian University". However, there is no evidence of this.

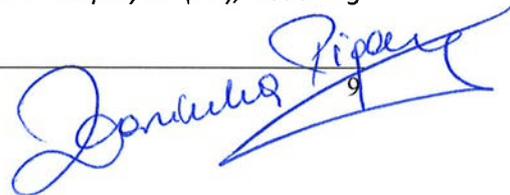
Conclusions of EEG:

- The DSP is a new study programme anchored within the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Legal Studies (Albanian University). It was initially conceived as part of a separate doctoral school but due to the suspension of new registrations to doctoral programmes following ministerial regulations, the programme is set up within the Law Department of AU. It is recommended that in case there is new regulation "unfreezing" new registrations to doctoral programmes, the DSP is developed within a separate structure of a Doctoral School. This would allow the programme to make use of separate and more dedicated institutional/administrative/human resources and facilities.
- The mission and objectives of the DSP are clear and correspond to its academic and research orientated character.
- The DSP has defined its short, medium and long-term strategies. However, these strategies often are confusing, overlapping and not clearly defined. It is advisable to have a clearer definition of these strategies: as mentioned above "the legal organization of contractual law" seems to correspond better to a long-term strategy as the Albanian legal system may benefit from research output of this DSP; on the other hand preparation of doctoral students may be better suited as a short-term strategy; furthermore, in my view it is not clear what is meant with "the adaptability of the study programme with the need and work market".
- At the start of the DSP there have been 5 students enrolled in the programme. At the time of the site visit, there were *de facto* three doctoral students enrolled in the third year of the DSP and attending it. This number is in line with Art. 17(2) of the DSP Regulation. However, it is recommended that there is a clear track record of *all* the students enrolled in the DSP and that any change in their status as doctoral students is well documented. The situation of the other two students is not clear and it is recommended that immediate measures are taken in this regard.
- The SER mentions also credits granted 'in the framework of the School of Magistrates' as credits that may be recognised or transferred. This is in line with legislation applicable to the DSP.
- The DSP may benefit from many international and national institutional cooperation agreements. However, it is recommended that they become concrete and that they affect staff and especially doctoral student's mobility.
- Concerning the self-evaluation report, it is recommended that the DSP Regulation reflects the obligation that that report should be reviewed by the Council of Professors and that this rule is enforced in practice.

2. Academic Organisation chart of the Doctoral School

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG **should analyze and evaluate** the: the place of the Doctoral School in the organization chart of the HEI (University / Faculty / Department), data for the academic staff responsible for the doctorate, the number of Full-time Academic Staff (FAS), Part-time Academic Staff (PAS), Administrative employees (AE), teaching coordination with other units.



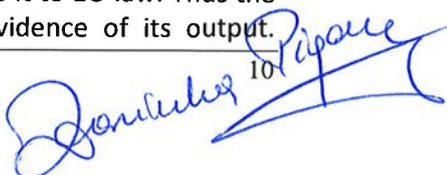
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According to the SER, the DSP Regulation (Art. 6) and from observations during the site visit, one can conclude that the DSP is a third cycle programme of AU and is embedded within the Law Department of AU. According to Art. 10 of the DSP Regulation, the DSP is governed by the Council of Professors, thesis supervisors, the (legal studies) department and the doctoral studies coordinator. The Council of Professors determines the general guidelines of the programme and is the main decision-making body for the programme. Daily administration is shared between the doctoral studies coordinator and the Head of Legal Studies Department, and of course supporting/administrative staff. The doctoral studies coordinator is appointed, among academic staff, by the Council of Professors.

According to Art. 11 of the DSP Regulation, some of the tasks of the Council of Professors, include: it leads the drafting of policies and strategies of research in the areas that it covers; sets up the Committee for the admission of applicants to the DSP programme; determines the admissions procedure; determines the form of the general/theoretical exam at the end of the first year; decides on the admission of the doctoral student to the second and third year, as well as decides on the extension with one year of the study for an individual doctoral student; approves thesis titles and supervisors. There is evidence that the Council of Professors has fulfilled its obligations with regard to the setting up of the Committee for the Assessment of Applicants to the Doctoral Study Programmes for 2013-2014 (see decision 4 March 2013); it also has decided on the admission of qualified candidates and on the division of supervisors, as well as on the admission of doctoral students from the first to the second and the second to the third year of the DSP (see decisions no. 313 and no. 313/1 of 5 May 2014, no. 212 of 17 June 2015). The coordinator of doctoral studies has been appointed by the Academic Senate of the University with Decision no. 540/3 of 10 December 2012 and Decision no. 2454/2 of 29 October 2014. There seems to be a discrepancy between the practice –appointment by the Academic Senate – and the Regulation which gives this task to the Council of Professors. There is no evidence of a decision by the Council of Professors on the form of the general/theoretical exam at the end of the first year.

The Council of Professors is composed of eight members. In the meeting with the Council of Professors, only three out of the eight members were present. Furthermore, after the departure of the Chair of the Council of Professors, the Council of Professors has effectively 7 members and the position of the Chair seems to be vacant. Stability of governing bodies should be guaranteed. This lack of stability of staff was recognized also during the introductory meeting with the Rector. Furthermore, according to Decision no. 467 of Council of Ministers dated 18 July 2007 there should be at least 7 members in the Council of Professors, holding the title of Professor or Associate Professor who are in the process of obtaining the status of Professor. From the eight current members, three do not hold the title of Associate Professor and there is no evidence that either they are in the process of applying for the title Professor or that they have obtained it.

During the meeting with the Council of Professors, the following information emerged: the Council of Professors is an inter-Faculty body and it meets three times per year to discuss on the doctoral programmes and other issues. They monitor teaching of academic staff and research output of doctoral students. The thesis supervisor is indirectly monitored through the work of the doctoral student. The progress of doctoral students is monitored also through the doctoral days: during these days the Council of Professors reviews the report submitted by the thesis supervisor, as well as publications and conference participation of doctoral students. Last but not least, in the meeting it was mentioned that there is a research strategy of the HEI drafted under the supervision of the Council of Professors. Whereas there is no evidence of such a strategy, one can mention the research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: Challenges and strategies" drafted by the Institute of Scientific Research and Development of AU and with a duration 72 months (2012-2018). One of the objectives of this research project is to explore the national legal framework of contract law and how to approximate it to EU law. Thus the DSP seems to be part of this research project, although there is no evidence of its output.


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Furthermore, this research project is set out under the initiative of the said Institute and not the Council of Professors. Thus it is recommended that the Council of Professors as required in the DSP Regulation, takes the lead of the drafting of policies and strategies of research in the areas that it covers.

The thesis supervisor is determined by the Council of Professors. His/her academic qualification should correspond to the field of research of the doctoral student. According to Art. 12 of the DSP Regulation, the thesis supervisor should have at least the academic title of "Doctor" obtained in Western universities. According to Art. 12(4) of the DSP Regulation, the thesis supervisor must support the doctoral students by assisting him/her in determining the title of the doctoral thesis, in preparing the research proposal and recommending literature. He/she guarantees that supervision is performed within the given time frame of the doctoral studies. He/she meets regularly with the doctoral student (2-3 hours per week). The thesis supervisor is in charge of assessing the progress of the doctoral student.

The Department of Legal Studies prepares the study programme which is then reviewed by the Faculty Council and finally adopted by the Academic Senate of AU. The Department works together with the Council of Professors and the coordinator of doctoral studies for the organization of the theoretical year and, in addition, together with the thesis supervisor in the second and third year.

The coordinator of the doctoral studies is in charge of organizing and administering the DSP. He/she coordinates the admissions procedure, organizes and monitors every step of the process during the first theoretical year by working together with the Department and under the supervision of the Council of Professors. In the words of the Head of the Legal Studies Department, the coordinator is the contact and linking point between the doctoral students on the one hand, and the Department and the Council of Professors, on the other.

Measurable indicators:

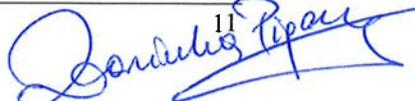
- Number of academic staff (verify the data, according to Table 1 and 2)

Table 1/1- Nuber of academic staff during the academic year 2013-2014, as reported in the SER

	Number of FAS		Number of PAS		Number of AE		Total number	
	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's
Doctoral School	4	(2) Associate Professor (2) Dr. west	5	(4) Prof.Dr (1)Associate Professor	1	Msc	10	(4)Prof. Dr (3)Associate Professor (2)Dr.west (1) Msc

Table 1/2 Number of academic staff following the visit at the Human Resources Department

Staff engaged in the DSP European Contract	Number of FAS		Number of PAS		Number of AE		Total number	
	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's	Total number	Number of Degree's
	3	(1) Associate	6	(4) Prof.Dr	1	Msc	10	(4) Prof.Dr

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Law		Professor (2) Dr. west		(1) Associate Professor				(1) Prof. Assoc.Dr (2) Dr. West (1) Msc
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Table 2- Council of Professors and the coordinator of the study program

Table 2

Name /Surname	Degree	Position (Member / Chairman)
Erleta Celmeta (Mato)	Prof. Dr	Chair
Vera Ostreni	Prof. Assoc. Dr	Member
Anesti Kondili	Prof. Dr	Member
Hivzi Muharremi	Prof. Dr	Member
Ana Lalaj	Prof. Dr	Member
Rajmonda Duka	Prof. Dr	Member
Lida Miraj	Prof. Assoc. Dr	Member
Fatmir Tartale	Prof. Assoc. Dr	Member

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
- ✓ Decision on the appointment of the doctoral study coordinator
- ✓ Decision of the Council of Professors setting up the Committee for the admission of applicants to the DSP programme
- ✓ Research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies", Institute of Scientific Research and Development (AU)

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 1 Unit that organizes doctorate study program has accredited two first cycles of studies in the field, in which it offers the doctorate study program;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Unit that organizes the doctorate study program has adequate administrative premises to realize its good functioning;</p> <p>Criterion 3 In order to carry out the doctorate study program, the unit that proposes its opening engages the necessary personnel, ranging from teaching secretary that follows the third cycle progress;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Responsible bodies for its supervision are established in doctorate study program regulation;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Board of Professors, which is responsible for organizing and supervising doctorate study program has a sufficient number of members that cover all its issues. Minimum number of professors</p>	<p>Standard III.1 is complied with as follows:</p> <p>The two first cycles of relevant studies are accredited, namely the Bachelor Programme (Legal studies) accredited with Order of Ministry of Education No.541 of 1 December 2010 (accreditation valid until 1 December 2016) and Professional Master in Law (private law and criminal law) accredited with Order of Ministry of Education No. 585 of 27 November 2012. Accreditation valid until 27 November 2018 (source: website of APAAL)</p> <p>In general the unit that organizes the doctoral study programme has adequate administrative premise to ensure a good functioning of the DSP. The library is very basic, but this will be elaborated on later in this report. In addition, the Law Department of AU provide for the necessary personnel and facilities for the DSP. The head of the Law Department, the coordinator of the doctoral</p>

*Donalio Pipera*¹²

<p>in PC should be 7 (seven). Board of Professors may be also raised to the level of higher education institution, when its main units do not meet the required number of full-time professors;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Board of Professors of the main unit that organizes and manages the doctorate study program meets periodically throughout the year;</p>	<p>programmes, the assistant to the Law Department are in charge of administration and files. The academic staff are in charge and deliver teaching and theoretical training as well as supervision.</p> <p>Responsible bodies for the DSP comprise the Council of Professors, thesis supervisors; the Department (of Legal Studies), and the coordinator of the doctoral programme. However, stability of governing bodies should be guaranteed, as in the case of the departure of the Head of the Council of Professors. At the moment, the Council of Professors has seven effective members. According to the SER and documents obtained, some of the members (three) have not obtained the title of Professor. Membership to the Council of Professors should be brought in line with the law.</p> <p>The Council of Professors meets three times per year.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The DSP is a third cycle programme embedded within the Law Department of AU. ▪ The DSP is governed by the Council of Professors, thesis supervisors, the (legal studies) department and the doctoral studies coordinator. This provides the DSP with the necessary administrative and human resources. ▪ The Council of Professors functions as the main governing and monitoring body of the DSP. However, it is recommended that the University takes immediate measures to ensure the stability of the governing of the DSP, as the case of the Head of the Council of Professors shows. Also, it is strongly recommended that membership of the Board (concerning titles among members of the Council of Professors) is brought in line with legislation in force. 	

3. Quality of Academic and administrative (support) staff

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG **should analyze and evaluate** the: dates for qualifications of academic staff, FAS/PAS/AE rate, Academic Staff/student rate; work load for FAS, PAS and AE; staff recruitment criteria; Contracts, data base for human resource; etc.

During academic year 2013-2014 (start of the DSP) there were four full-time academic staff, of which two had the academic title "Associate Professor" and two "Doctor". Four part-time academic staff had the title "Professor" and one "Associate Professor". Contracts of the five part-time academic staff and thesis supervisors were reviewed during our visit at the human resources office. For the academic year 2015-2016 there are three full-time academic staff (one Associate Professor and two Doctor) and five part-time academic staff. In any case, full-time academic staff represents less than 60% of staff and this should be remedied. Academic staff engaged during academic year 2013-2014 (the DSP theoretical year) delivered teaching in all nine theoretical subjects.

The rate between academic staff and doctoral students at the moment is satisfactory given that there are only three doctoral students.

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In general, all academic staff (internal and external) engage in research; they are active through publications of monographs or academic articles in Albanian or international journals. Research output in the form of publications in qualitative international journals is rather limited and could be improved.

Furthermore, as far as research is concerned, as mentioned above, the Institute for Scientific Research and Development (AU) has drafted a project entitled "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies". From the description of the project, it appears that the DSP could benefit. Also internal staff from the DSP are part of the project. The idea of a multidisciplinary project is a good one, however there is no evidence of the output of the project and whether it is still active.

During the visit at the human resources office I reviewed the contracts of these supervisors. There are currently three theses being supervised at the DSP: one by a FAS with the title of Associate Professor; one by a PAS with the title of Professor and one by an external Professor. External thesis supervisors are engaged based on a "service" contract. In general, there is a very good match between the thesis supervisor and the doctoral student, with the exception of one case in which the doctoral student writes his/her doctoral thesis on an issue of contract law and the thesis supervisor, according to the CV and evaluation form of academic personnel, conducts research in criminal law. It is recommended that in the future the match between the thesis profile and research profile of the supervisor is guaranteed to the fullest.

The SER mentions that the "Selection of members of academic staff as well as the performance evaluation is regulated by the relevant provisions in the Charter of the "Albanian University" and separate document." The Statute of AU does not seem to have clear criteria on this, neither does the SER refer specifically to another "separate document" which sets out this criteria. What the SER does nevertheless is listing the main criteria for evaluation of staff, without mentioning a specific document in which these criteria have been codified:

"The main criteria on which the evaluation / recruitment of candidates are the candidates' performance indicators such as:

Experience in teaching at university level;

At least the scientific degree of PhD and associate professor titles, Professor, Academic;

The quality and standards of the university where he graduated candidate, giving priority to Western universities;

personal results of the candidate;

research and publishing activity and its compliance with the scientific objectives of the "Albanian University";

communication skills and ethics;

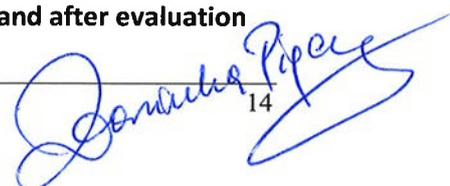
its objectives of medium and long term academic and scientific career;

employment experience;

Mastery of foreign languages and the extent of their use."

Last but not least, with regard to administrative staff, during the site visit I noted that the DSP gets support from the administrative staff of the Law Department. The assistant to the Department administers the files of the doctoral students. The secretary to the Department administers the Registry.

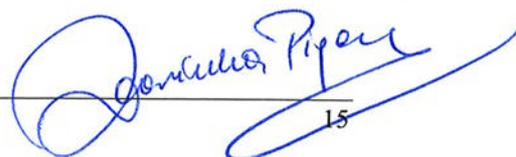
Table 3/1: Academic Staff during academic year 2013-2014 according to SER and after evaluation on the site


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Institution / Basic Unit / Doctoral School							
Full-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Position in the Department	Degree	Part-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Degree	Institution where he/her works full time
1	Fatmir Tartale	Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, AU	Prof. Assoc. Dr	1	Enrico Camilleri	Prof. Dr	Department of Law SciencesJuridike, pranë University of Palermo, Italy
2	Alketa Marku	Department of Political and Administrative Sciences, AU	Dr. west	2	Argita Malltezi	Prof. Dr	Faculty of Justice, UT
3	Jorida Xhafaj	Department of Legal Studies, AU	Dr. west	3	Aldo Schiavelo	Prof. Dr	Department of Law Sciences, University of Palermo, Italy
4	Eriona Katro	Deputy Rector, AU	Prof. Assoc. Dr	4	Marjana Semini	Prof. Dr	Magistrate School
				5	Merita Xhumari	Prof. Assoc. Dr	University of Tirana

Table 3/2 Academic Staff during academic year 2015-2106

Institution / Basic Unit / Doctoral School							
Full-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Position in the Department	Degree	Part-time Academic Staff (Name/Surname)		Degree	Institution where he/her works full time
1.	Fatmir Tartale	Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, AU	Prof. Assoc. Dr.	1.	Enrico Camilleri	Prof. Dr	Department of Law, University of Palermo, Italy
2.	Alketa Marku	Department of Political and Administrative Sciences, AU	Dr. west	2.	Argita Malltezi	Prof. Dr	Faculty of Law, University of Tirana
3.	Jorida Xhafaj	Department of Legal Studies, AU	Dr. west	3.	Aldo Schiavelo	Prof. Dr	Department of Law, University of Palermo, Italy
				4.	Marjana Semini	Prof. Dr	The Albanian School of Magistrates


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				5.	Merita Xhumari	Prof. Assoc. Dr	Faculty of social Sciences, University of Tirana
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Qualification data and reports between them (verify the data, according to Table 4)

Table 4/1: Academic year 2013-2014

Academic and administrative staff	FAS	PAS		FAS/PAS rate
		Albanian	Foreign (invited)	
Professors	0	2	2	0 / 4
Associate Professors	2	1	-	2 / 1
Doctors (PhD obtained in a Western University)	2	-	-	2 / 0
Administrative Staff	1			

Table 4/2 Academic year 2015-2016

Academic and administrative staff	FAS	PAS		FAS/PAS rate
		Albanian	Foreign (invited)	
Professors	-	2	2	0/4
Associate Professors	1	1	-	1/1
Doctor Degree or PHD degree (taken at European Universities)	2	-	-	2/0
Administrative employes	1			

Data by age (verify the data, according to Table 5)

Table 5: Academic year 2013-2014

Academic and administrative staff	Data by age (years old)							
	(30-45)		(46-55)		(56-65)		(66-68)	
	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS	FAS	PAS
Professors		3		1				
As. Prof	1			1	1			
Doktors (PHD attained in European Universities)	2							
Administrative Staff	1							

Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution:

- ✓ Annex CV of staff during theoretical year and thesis supervisors, DSP European Contract Law
- ✓ Form on evaluation of human personnel concerning teaching and research
- ✓ Contracts of staff (FAS, PAS, thesis supervisors)

Evaluation according to the Standards

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Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
<p>Criterion 6 The number and level of researchers engaged in this program constitutes a guarantee for program implementation (60% of them should be internal academic staff, engaged in research and holders of academic titles "Professor", "Associate Professor" or scientific degree "Doctor" or "PhD" awarded in universities well known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field;</p>	<p>In general the number and level of academic staff engaged in the DSP guarantees the implementation of the programme to a satisfactory level. However, it is noted that full-time academic staff represents less than 60% of staff and it is recommended that appropriate measures are taken to remedy this situation.</p>
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 1 The institution that offers programs of study of third cycle (doctorate), has sufficient academic staff with scientific titles and degrees;</p> <p>Criterion 2 The institution has sufficient administrative and research structures for activities provided in the study program to conduct research. The institution may organize joint programs of doctorate study with one or more other institutions, based on agreements between them;</p>	<p>During academic year 2013-2014 the DSP had sufficient academic staff to deliver teaching in all nine theoretical subjects. Nevertheless, the number of FAS is not within the required norms. Currently, thesis supervision is done by one FAS, one PAS and one contracted thesis supervisor. In general the match between the thesis profile and research profile of the supervisor is satisfactory, but it is recommended that in the future it is guaranteed to the fullest. The HEI offers the necessary administrative structures to perform research and the DSP may benefit from this. Especially, the DSP has academic staff to conduct research; however a higher number of FAS would guarantee a more sustainable research profile of the programme. The research project mentioned above is a good idea, provided that it delivers tangible research output.</p>
Conclusions of EEG:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During academic year 2013-2014 the DSP had sufficient academic staff with scientific titles to deliver teaching in all nine theoretical subjects. However, full-time academic staff represents less than 60% of staff thus measures should be taken to remedy this situation. ▪ In general the match between the thesis profile and research profile of the supervisor is satisfactory, but it is recommended that in the future it is guaranteed to the fullest. ▪ Academic staff engages in research and research output is visible nationally and to a smaller extent internationally. However, the institution should emphasise the importance of quality research. ▪ The DSP is supported by administrative structures of the Law Department and depending on the context by other administrative structures of the University. ▪ The institution has academic staff to conduct research; however a higher number of FAS would guarantee a more sustainable research profile of the programme. 	

4. Facilities, infrastructure, logistics and other services of doctoral program

Description part



Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG **should analyze and evaluate** the: infrastructure, material resources, logistics and other services, information technology (IT), libraries, other services for students.

During the site visit in the main building of the University, we visited the office of the Rector, the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Law Department, the library, classrooms and other surrounding facilities (cafeteria/restaurant). The general impression is that the university infrastructure is satisfactory with classrooms that provide the necessary space and equipped with technological tools.

The library is situated in the same main building of the University and consists of a large hall with shelves and desks for students to work. Students can make use of computer facilities in the library. According to the SER "So far in the library collection are numbered about 6,000 books belonging to different titles. The institution spends annually funds intended for the purchase of specialized literature for every study program in the field of scientific research." While it may be true that the library collection includes 6000 titles and that the institution invests in its library, the infrastructure of the library concerning the DSP is very limited. According to the list of publications that are part of the library collection, there are around 40 titles which may be of direct or indirect relevance to the DSP. Almost the absolute majority of these titles concerns domestic (Albanian) law and few are on European Union Law (EU law), and those on EU law concern general knowledge on it. There is no title on European Contract Law as such while international research and publications in this field are to a very developed stage.

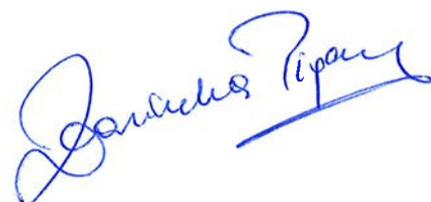
The online library consists of two main databases: 1) www.questia.com and 2) <http://portal.getty.edu/>. The first database is accessible via one email address, but it can be accessed by several students at the same time. The second is an open access database. The first database hosts the following categories of titles that may be relevant for the DSP: Legal Theory, Civil Law, International Law and Law Enforcement. According to the SER "Library on line is another feature of university infrastructure thus allowing over 1000 titles to be made available to teachers and students of the master program (in English and foreign languages) for 24 hours." While this may be true, the institution has to make sure that the library offers access to basic sources such as the following journals (just to mention a few by way of example): European Review of Contract Law; European Journal of Commercial Contract Law; European Review of Private Law; Common Market Law Review etc.

Thus it can be concluded that students admitted to the DSP have basic conditions to perform their study and research tasks at the library of the institution. They have basic technical support for their research activities. However, it is strongly recommended that immediate measures are taken to enrich the library with national/international titles directly related to the DSP (which at the moment are lacking) as well as to add to the online library the most basic titles of publications or databases directly related to the DSP.

Measurable indicators:

The Faculty of Social Sciences provides the following facilities and infrastructure to the doctoral programme:

- Auditoriums
- Classrooms
- Laboratories
- Computer/internet laboratories
- Library buildings
- Corridors / halls
- University sports facilities



- Buildings for tertiary services
- Rooms for student government activities
- Recreational facilities such as cafeterias / fast-food/etc
- Toiletes for students
- Logistics Room (for photocopying machines, etc.)
- Offices for Dean/ Chancellory/etc
- Administrative offices
- Department offices
- Quality assurance Unit Office
- Meeting halls
- Toilet units for staff
- Toilet units for students
- Etc

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
 - List of titles in the library (provided upon request by the librarian during the site visit)
 - List of texts (library and online library), provided by the Institution as supporting document

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard II.2 - Didactic basis and technical support	
<p>Criterion 1 Students admitted in the third cycle study program have necessary conditions to realize the study program with academic and research character;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Doctorate studies program provides harmonization of student's goals in scientific-research field, approved research projects and, at its conclusion, even the possibility of academic career and employment;</p> <p>Criterion 3 A scientific library with publications in hardcopy and electronic form and complete IT infrastructure available to of third cycle study program;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Students have sufficient technical support for scientific research development;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Researches that include laboratory researches are supported by sufficient scientific laboratory basis.</p>	<p>Standard II.2 is met with the following exceptions. Students part of the DSP have the necessary basic infrastructure to perform their study and research tasks; the University guarantees to them facilities such as classrooms equipped with technical facilities, administrative support of the Department and a library. A scientific library, on the site and online, is made available to the DSP and its students. However, it fulfills only minimum/basic needs. Thus, it is strongly recommended that immediate measures are taken to enrich the library with national/international titles directly related to the DSP (which at the moment are lacking) as well as to add to the online library the most basic titles of publications or databases directly related to the DSP.</p> <p>The process at the DSP is an overarching programme: it connects the theoretical year with approved research project and the outcome of this, which is the doctoral thesis.</p>
<p><u>Conclusions of EEG:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The general impression is that the university infrastructure is satisfactory with classrooms that provide the necessary space and equipped with technological tools. ▪ Students admitted to the DSP have basic conditions to perform their study and research tasks at the library of the institution. They have basic technical support for their research activities. However, it is strongly recommended that immediate measures are taken to enrich the library with national/international titles directly related to the DSP (which at the moment are lacking) as well as to add to the online library the most basic titles of publications or databases directly related to the 	

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5. Financing and management of financial resources

Descriptions part

Terms of reference: *Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: financial resources, data over the years, expenditures, costs per students, financial auditing, and managing capacities.*

The SER states that “at the university level there is a unit that deals with the management of financial resources and their control to the criteria mentioned below.” We did not have a meeting with staff managing financial resources but asked for financial reports. According to the Organizational Chart of the Institution (available online), there is a Department of Finance linked to the Administrator of the University.

The SER states that the “The institution has a financial report for each budgetary year (for all previous years) designed and certified by external experts. The report has detailed data on income from tuition fees, wages, health insurance, social security, personal income tax, operating costs etc.” Upon our request, at the end of the visit we were provided with a financial report of the DSP (hereinafter “the DSP report”), which seems to be different from that referred to in the SER. This DSP report covers the following academic years: 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. However, the DSP report is not signed or does not state the authors.

According to the SER the main financial resources for 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 are tuition fees and sponsorships. In the DSP report the only source of income are tuition fees. According to the DSP report, the budget for scientific research is 200000 AL for each academic year. This budget could cover registration fees and travel for the participation of five doctoral students in an international conference, but it would be difficult to cover full participation in an international conference, let alone a research stay at another university or research centre.

The DSP has not received external funding. This may be explained by the fact that the programme is a relatively new one which, in addition, was affected by legislation that suspended new registrations. The financial budget of the DSP in the first academic year showed a discrepancy between income (solely from tuition) and relatively high expenses due to intensive teaching. In the second and third year the rate income/expenses was more balanced. In this regard, it is recommended that in the future the DSP or the HEI ensures other stable sources of financing apart from tuition and drafts a strategy for external funding.

Data and findings below are based on the SER and the DSP report.

Measurable indicators:

- Financial resources and data over the three years (verify the data, according to Table 7)

Table 7

RESOURCES FROM:	For three or four years (as the PhD study program continues)
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:	

Central government	-
Local government	-
NON-PUBLIC FUNDS:	
Grants on research and contracts	-
Consultations, services	-
All kinds of tuition fees	Tuition fee- 3000 Eur per academic year
Sponsorships	No evidence in the DSP report
Donations, assurance activities, foundations etc.	-

Income and expenses DSP

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Income from tuition fee: 1,712,500 AL (calculated for five students)	Income from tuition fee: 1,712,500 AL (calculated for five students)	Income from tuition fee: 1,712,500 AL (calculated for five students)
Expenses teaching and research: 9,586,000	Expenses teaching and research: 508,250 AL	Expenses teaching and research: 508,250 AL

Three observations are due here:

Firstly, there have been no mobility costs for doctoral students as there has been no mobility of doctoral students.

Secondly, according to this financial report, the programme has five FAS, whereas according to numbers provided earlier in this report, for academic year 2013-2014 there have been four FAS.

Thirdly, income from tuition fees remains the same for all academic years although since academic year 2014-2015 there are only three active students.

Transparency and internal financial control, audit and outcomes;

As mentioned above, the financial report that we were provided with does not indicate who has drafted it and is not signed.

Financial management capacity;

We did not meet with staff working at the financial office.

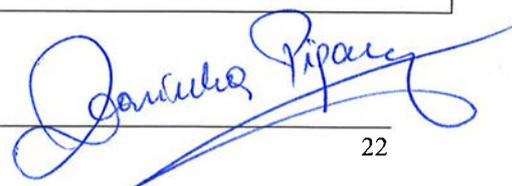
Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution;

✓ Financial Report for the DSP European Contract Law

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.1 - General framework	
Criterion 5 Doctorate study program is supported by a sufficient budget for research;	If research is understood as including mobility of doctoral students for research stay, expenses for presentation of research and expenses for organizing conference at the HEI or DSP, the budget seems limited and the HEI is encouraged to increase it.

Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
Criterion 8 External funding received for scientific research is indicative of high level research activity and they are administered for the progress of relevant study program.	The DSP has not received external funding. This may be explained by the relatively short time of existence of the DSP. However, a strategy for external funding should be put in place. This would represent an effort of introducing an alternative source of income.
Standard III.1 - Management and financing tools for doctorate study program	
Criterion 7 Financial budget of doctorate study program is sufficient to achieve research objectives for each doctorate student;	According to the DSP report, the sole source of income is tuition fees. It is recommended that in the future the DSP or the HEI ensures other stable sources of financing apart from tuition and drafts a strategy for external funding.
Criterion 8 Financial budget distribution structure of doctorate study program matches with scientific research policy and needs.	According to the DSP, the most of the budget goes for teaching expenses while less is reserved for research. This rate is balanced in the second and third year do to the lack of teaching.
Standard III.3 - Financing of doctorate study program	
Criterion 1 Number of research works funded by the ministry;	There is no evidence of research work funded by the Ministry of Education. There is no evidence of research works funded under national or international research projects.
Criterion 2 Distribution of funds to host and supervision teams of scientific research works is done in a balanced way;	
Criterion 3 Number of research works funded under national research projects, benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;	
Criterion 4 Number of research works funded under international research projects benefited by scientific supervisors of doctorate students for this study program;	
Conclusions of EEG:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to the SER there are two main sources of income for the HEI: fees and sponsorships. According to the DSP report, the sole source of income is tuition fees of the DSP. In the first year of the doctoral programme, the income from tuition could not fully cover expenses. There was no indication of how the rest of the programme was supported, but one may assume that the DSP relies on the general finances of the HEI. It is recommended that in the future the DSP or the HEI ensures other stable sources of financing apart from tuition and drafts a strategy for external funding. ▪ If research is understood as including mobility of doctoral students for research stay, expenses for presentation of research and expenses for organizing conference at the HEI or DSP, the budget seems limited and measures should be taken to increase it. ▪ There is no evidence of external research funding (national or international) and it is strongly recommended that the HEI and the DSP define a strategy for external funding. This would improve research visibility and output as well as could contribute to having more alternative financial resources for the DSP. 	



6. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG **should analyze and evaluate the:** Internal Monitoring for Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), its functions in doctoral programs, self-assessment and continuous quality improvement.

During the first day of the visit we met with one representative from the IQAU and one representative from the office of curricula. Apart from working for these two offices, they perform teaching duties as well. The two representatives stated that their main task within the IQAU and the curricula office is the assurance of the quality of programmes.

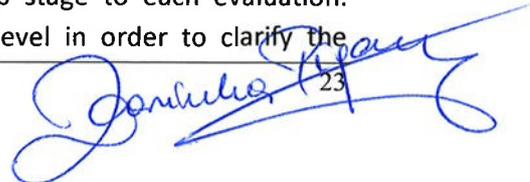
Student evaluations at the HEI are performed at the end of each semester and before the exam period (see pg. 11 of the HEI Annual Report). According to the statements of the IQAU there has been one evaluation process for the DSP at the end of the first theoretical year. There are no evaluations in the second and third year, but only before the submission of the doctoral thesis. This practice may be problematic as it does not give doctoral students the possibility to assess the supervision process as it takes place but only at the end of the writing process, which sometimes may be too late.

When asked concretely about the procedure of evaluation, the IQAU listed the following steps: standard evaluation forms are drafted by the IQAU, electronic anonymous surveys with doctoral students are conducted, survey results go to the respective Department which then drafts a report, this report is sent to the Faculty and then discussed in the Senate of the University. This process as described during the meeting has the risk of *de facto* leaving the IQAU outside of quality assurance, especially if the IQAU is not the office processing the data from student evaluations. Furthermore, it seems that the IQAU does not engage in the adoption of follow-up measures to these surveys. Nor does it monitor the implementation of measures taken as a response to students' evaluations. When asked about the Deming Cycle (Plan Do Study Act) or any other follow-up stage to quality control, the two representatives stated that the quality assurance process cannot be considered complete yet and there is room for improvement. It is recommended that this situation is remedied and measures are taken to ensure a closed cycle of quality control (see e.g. the Deming Cycle)

When asked about quality assurance in research for staff, the IQAU answered that this is done through the Department. Every year academic staff is asked to submit information on their research activity (conference participation and publications). In the DSP progress report there is no analysis of this.

After the meeting we were provided -upon our request- with the progress report of the DSP European Contract Law and the 2015-2016 Annual Evaluation Report on Quality Assurance (HEI Annual Report). The former report is the only document concerning quality assurance to which we had access, and we did not see any other annual report on the DSP. The latter report refers to the HEI as a whole.

In general, the IQAU is strongly encouraged to review and complete their quality assurance procedure, by especially making sure that there is a clear follow-up stage to each evaluation. Furthermore, concrete measures should be taken at the University level in order to clarify the


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position of the IQAU vis-a-vis other offices and to strengthen the role of the IQAU in the evaluation process.

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
 - ✓ Progress Report of the DSP European Contract Law
 - ✓ 2015-2016 Annual Evaluation Report on Quality Assurance

STUDY PROGRAM

7. Study program, its organization

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: Title of Diploma (in Albanian and English), mission and objectives of the research program, the organization of the first year in doctorate school, the curriculum content of all its elements (subjects / modules, corresponding credits, sharing teaching hours per study forms, classes in /outside of auditorium under the forms of teaching), literature and other auxiliary materials, etc.

As already mentioned before, the DSP European Contract Law is conceptualized as a study programme of three years with the possibility of one year extension granted following a decision of the Council of Professors (Art. 28 of the DSP Regulation). The first year of studies is a theoretical year, organized in two semesters, at the end of which doctoral students must obtain 60 EC (1500 teaching hours). According to Art. 23 of the DSP Regulation, credits obtained in the framework of the Post Graduate School (SHPU) or Master of Second Level (MND) may be recognised partially or fully for the purposes of the first year of the DSP. Apart from the obligation of obtaining these credits, doctoral students must also pass a general/ theoretical exam at the end of the first year. In the second and third year doctoral student focuses on the conceptualization, research and writing of their doctoral thesis as well as participates in academic conferences and publishes his/her research. (See Arts. 22, 23 and 25 of the DSP Regulation)

Measurable indicators:

- Division of subjects in credits for the first academic year and assessment of data

Table 8

Year I	Subjects/ Modules	Semester	Credits (ECTS)	Hour in week	Academic Curriculum Plan												Final exam		
					Lecture (hour)			Seminar (hour)			Laboratory (hour)			Practice (hour)				Total in class	Total Individual student work
					Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits	In class	Individual student work	Total credits	In class	Individual student work			
1	Method of scientific research in social sciences	1	7		4	48	52	2	15	35	1	25				88	87	Yes	
2	European Contract Law	1	9		6	72	78	2.5	17	45.5				0.5	1	11.5	90	135	Yes
3	International Commercial Law	1	8		5	60	65	2.5	20	42.5				0.5	1	11.5	81	119	Yes
4	Contracting techniques and	1	6		2.5	30	32.5	3	20	55				0.5	1	11.5	51	99	Yes

*Sanjida Pijare*²⁴

	alternative ways dispute resolution																	
5	Banking and Financial contracts	2	6	3.5	42	45.5	2	15	35			0.5	1	11.5	58	92	Yes	
6	Contracts and Competition	2	6	3.5	42	45.4	2	15	35			0.5	1	11.5	58	92	Yes	
7	Insurance contracts	2	6	3.5	42	45.5	2	15	35			0.5	1	11.5	58	92	Yes	
8	Consumer contracts	2	6	3.5	42	45.5	2	15	35			0.5	1	11.5	58	92	Yes	
9	Employment contracts	2	6	3.5	42	45.5	2	15	35			0.5	1	11.5	58	92	Yes	
Total			60															

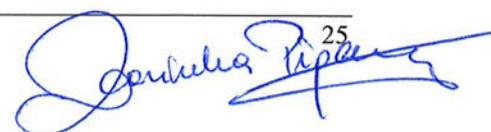
Academic staff as part of the Curriculum Plan

Table 9

Subject/Module	Responsible professor/s (Name Surname)	Title/degree	Department	FAS or PAS
1. European Contract Law	Enrico Camilleri	Prof. Dr	Department of Legal Sciences, University of Palermo, Italy	PAS
2. International Commercial Law	Argita Malltezi	Prof. Dr	Faculty of Law, UT	PAS
3. Methods of scientific research in social sciences	Aldo Schiavello	Prof. Dr	Department of legal sciences, University of Palermo, Italy	PAS
4. Contracting techniques and alternative ways of dispute resolution	Marjana Semini	Prof. Dr	Magistrate School	PAS
5. Banking and Financial contracts	Eriona Katro	Associate Professor	Department of Legal Sciences, AU	FAS (at the moment of engaging)
6. Contracts and competition	Eriona Katro	Associate Professor	Department of Legal Sciences, AU	FAS (at the moment of engaging)
7. Insurance contracts	Merita Xhumari	Prof.asoc	Tirana University	PAS
8. Consumer contracts	Alketa Marku	PhD.	Department of Politic-Administrative Sciences, AU	FAS
9. Employment contracts	Jorida Xhafaj	PhD.	Department of Legal Sciences, AU	FAS

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.4 - Design and realization of theoretical course of third cycle studies (Doctorate)	
<p>Criterion 1 Programs of third cycle studies include 60 credits for theoretical organized studies;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Theoretical organized studies anticipate balanced ratio of classes for academic and scientific</p>	<p>Standard I.4 is generally met for the following reasons: After successful completion of the theoretical year, students obtain 60 EC. During the theoretical year students obtain general and specialized knowledge in the field of European contract law. This knowledge will serve them as a</p>

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<p>general and specific training;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Detailed teaching program is approved pursuant to bylaws in force;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Theoretical doctorate course is evaluated with a general theoretical examination in relevant field of study, organized by Dean's office and Professors' Council, with a commission consisting of 5 (five) professors in the relevant research field or approximate to it. Candidates who achieve over 80% points are allowed to attend the doctorate research studies. Those who do not reach this result receive a certificate for conducted modules, together with accumulated credits and interrupt doctorate studies.</p>	<p>theoretical basis for drafting and completing their research project. Furthermore, at the end of the theoretical year doctoral students have to obtain 80% of the points in the general exam in order to pass to the second year of the doctorate programme.</p> <p>However, it is recommended that the following elements are taken into account in order to improve the syllabi:</p> <p>a) firstly, some courses seem to be practice oriented with learning outcomes such as "the student will be able to determine the competent court in a concrete case before him/her" (International Commercial Law) or "the student will be able to apply theoretical knowledge in concrete cases during his/her work" (Banking and Financial Contracts).</p> <p>b) Secondly, mandatory or recommended literature for each course, in general, is outdated. In some cases the year of the publication is not mentioned (so it is not possible to assess), but in other cases one notes that the most recent publication dates 2008 and the oldest 1956.</p> <p>c) The assessment scheme is not specific enough (e.g. participation is 10-20% of the overall grade; tests during the module 20-40%- but which test and when?)</p> <p>d) The course "Consumer contracts" is taught by one member of internal staff (FAS) who, according to the CV and list of scientific activities, has a PhD in European Studies and has no track record of research in the area of European consumer law.</p>
<p>Standard II.3 - Drafting and approval of proposed research project</p>	
<p>Criterion 1 Applicant who requires to be admitted to doctorate studies program has submitted the request for a particular research area and this has been discussed with him in the interview;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Scope of research is selected in such a way that doctorate studies program can support it;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Proposal is approved by Professors' Council if criteria prescribed and announced in regulation of doctorate studies are met.</p> <p>The following should be also confirmed:</p> <p>a) Duration of study program;</p> <p>b) Modalities of verification of research or creative activity of doctorate students;</p> <p>c) Manner of final presentation of scientific research result that doctorate student will achieve;</p> <p>Criterion 4 A member of academic staff with the title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or with scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in the scientific</p>	<p>Standard II.3 is met for the following reasons:</p> <p>Applicants to the DSP have submitted a research proposal that constitutes the basis for the doctoral thesis. According to data on the application process for the DSP, candidates have received an evaluation in points for their research proposal. After completion of the first theoretical year, the Council of Professors has approved the theses topics and supervisors for those successful doctoral students who were entitled to pass to the second year of the DSP (Decision 313/1 of 5 May 2014, Council of Professors of Albanian University).</p> <p>Research proposals correspond to the scientific profile of the DSP. In one exceptional case the research profile of the supervisor does not seem to fit entirely to the research profile of the doctoral project. Current thesis supervisors hold the title "Professor" and "Associate Professor. The progress of the research plan is discussed during the</p>

<p>field in which doctorate student follows the studies in universities known in the world, for quality and rich researching and publishing activities in the relevant field, is appointed by Board of Professors to supervise and support student's research work;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Doctorate student presents to Board of Professors the research development plan, designed by him and discussed with his supervisor;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Supervisor has advised repeatedly the students that he supervises for didactic duties and research activities as well as research methodology to ensure the progress of his studies in this program.</p>	<p>doctoral days. So far, there have been five doctoral days in which doctoral students have presented their research and have informed faculty about their progress. Moreover, the doctoral student has the obligation to present his/her research in international and national conferences and to publish his/her work in international/national academic journals. These constitute formal criteria for obtaining the title "Doctor", as per article 36 of the DSP Regulation. The Council of Professors does review the research development plan as designed and discussed with the supervisor and approves it (Decision of CoP of 17 June 2015)</p>
<p>Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research</p>	
<p>Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;</p>	<p>In theory this standard is met, because as mentioned above the DSP is part of the research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies" drafted by the Institute of Scientific Research. However, there is no evidence of the concrete output of this project and the impact it has had on the DSP as such.</p>
<p>Standard II.4 - Doctorate student's supervision and continuous evaluation of progress of doctorate studies</p>	
<p>Criterion 1 Scientific supervisor of student is responsible for directing, advising, assessment of student's needs and for developing and monitoring progress of student's research work. He has the academic title "Professor", "Associate Professor" or the scientific degree "Doctor" or ("PhD") awarded in Western universities and has a rich research and publishing activity;</p> <p>Criterion 2 All scientific supervisors have had the expertise, instruction and proper guidance for their role in realization of scientific research project of doctorate students;</p> <p>Criterion 3 Scientific supervisors work to update their knowledge and skills, based on institutional arrangements in order to enable the exchange of best practices and providing advice to support students effectively;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Board of Professors selects scientific supervisors, capable to supervise doctorate students' research work, based on assessment of their publishing and research activities inside and outside the country;</p> <p>Criterion 5 The main scientific supervisor and the other supervisor (when program of doctorate studies is offered by more than one university) guarantee that doctorate students receive sufficient support and guidance to facilitate their work to achieve success;</p> <p>Criterion 6 In all cases, the student must have only one identified contact point, who should be his main supervisor. If his main supervisor is not available, the</p>	<p>Standard II.4 concerning student's supervision and continuous evaluation is largely met for the following reasons:</p> <p>Thesis supervisors are responsible for directing, advising and monitoring students in their work. They do so through various means: they meet with doctoral students and discuss feedback (evidence from interviews with the doctoral students) and some participate in the doctoral days (of three thesis supervisors, only one has been present in all doctoral days). Thesis supervisors in this DSP hold the academic title "Associate Professor" or "Professor" and are renowned academics in their respective fields in Albania. In one case there is not a perfect match between the research profile of the doctoral candidate and the research profile of the thesis supervisor.</p> <p>During the site visit we met with one thesis supervisor (FAS). It was confirmed during the meeting that staying up to date with legal developments in domestic and EU law and academic literature is considered important and that the internet is a good way to do so. However, no specific details were given on how the internet is helpful, given especially the relatively limited access to the online library of the University.</p> <p>This DSP is offered by AU and students have one identified contact point as supervisor.</p> <p>Progress of doctoral students is assessed periodically and the main values for this are the doctoral days and the</p>

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student must know who will be the person to replace him;

Criterion 7 University ensures that supervisor has enough time to supervise doctorate student;

If the main leader is unable to continue supervision of student, or will be absent for a considerable period, he should be replaced by another his main supervisor before the period of awarding the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";

Criterion 8 If relationship student-supervisor does not function well, at the request of student or his supervisor, supervisor is changed, provided that this does not affect the project progress;

Criterion 9 Clear and transparent procedures are set for verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of student (for example, an annual review by a panel called for this purpose or by a special commission set up by Professors' Council);

Criterion 10 Doctorate student and his supervisor should be present during this process. The manner and periods of verification of knowledge or periodic evaluation of doctorate student are stipulated and specified in the beginning of doctorate studies program;

Criterion 11 Continuous evaluation conclusions for realization of scientific research project of program of doctorate studies are clear and transparent including suspension, extension or withdrawal from doctorate studies;

Criterion 12 Meetings between supervisors and doctorate students are documented, especially during the review of progress reports.

report drawn by the doctoral student and the supervisor at the end of the second year. As mentioned above, so far there have been five doctoral days. According to the minutes of the doctoral days, only one of the three supervisors has been present. It is strongly recommended that this practice is changed in the future, and all supervisors take part in these meetings. Furthermore, the progress of students during these doctoral days was assessed by a group of academic staff from the Faculty of Social Sciences. It is recommended that this Committee, apart from the supervisor, includes experts from within or outside the Department who can provide the doctoral student with valuable substantive feedback. From the minutes of the doctoral days, it does not seem that there is a special structure or panel called for these days or that a special commission is set up by the Council of Professors. It is recommended that a more institutionalized approach is taken in this regard which can be left up to the DSP to determine. However, the presence of the supervisor is a necessary element.

Continues progress is assessed and made known to successful candidates so far. As mentioned above in the report, there is no formal decision by the Council of Professors concerning the status of two doctoral students who are not active in the DSP. The Council of Professors does not list them among the successful candidates who pass to the third year, but there is no clear determination of their status within the DSP.

Standard II.5 - Final evaluation of students in this cycle of studies

Criterion 1 Student provides evidence that he has acquired:

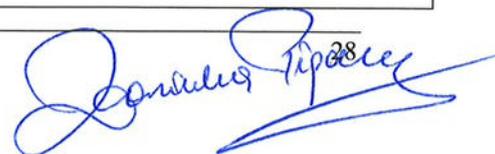
- a) Profound knowledge in relevant scientific field;
- b) Profound knowledge in some areas approximate to it;
- c) Professional skills in using modern technology to solve critical problems related to his field of scientific research;
- d) Innovation, to expand and update existing knowledge;
- e) Autonomy, scientific, professional integrity and dedication for development of new ideas that encourage scientific research;

Criterion 2 Student provides evidence that he has brought original scientific products, scientific works of a high scientific level through conducted scientific research, some of which have deserved or deserve publication in scientific national and international

Standard II.5 is fulfilled for the following reasons:

Students of this DSP have to produce evidence that they have acquired profound knowledge generally in the area of European contract law and more specifically in their area of research.

According to Art. 36 of the DSP Regulation, doctoral students have to submit evidence of three scientific presentations in conferences, one of which an international one and, of three publications, one of which in an academic journal with editorial board. These together with the doctoral thesis constitute the criteria for the assessment of the work of the doctoral student and for granting the title of "Doctor". All three candidates of the DSP European Contract Law intend to present their work as a doctoral thesis (and not in the form of three scientific articles, see criterion 4).



magazines;

Criterion 3 Final evaluation of doctorate students is based above all on an assessment of their scientific research product;

Criterion 4 On the basis of an agreement reached in the phase of the study program approval, scientific research result is presented as a dissertation thesis, or cumulative with 3 scientific articles published in international journals with impact factor coefficient above 1;

Criterion 5 In case of doctorate examination with dissertation thesis, doctorate student meets the following conditions:

- a) He has realized as first author at least three scientific papers or presentations (poster), of which two papers or presentations are held in a international scientific event, in a western country (symposium, conference, congress), accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific assessment, published in "Proceedings", indexed with an ISBN code;
- b) He has published as first author, at least three scientific articles in scientific journals. At least two of the articles have been published or accepted for publication in well-known western journals with editorial board;
- c) He has prepared and presented to Faculty Board of Professors the dissertation, along with a summary, approved by scientific supervisor. Structure of dissertation and its summary are defined in doctorate study regulation;

Criterion 6 Board of Professors defines two or three opponents, one of which is from outside the institution. Opponents are also members of the jury to assess dissertation. They have required academic titles and rich research and publishing activities inside and outside the country in the relevant field of study in which program doctorate studies is offered;

Criterion 7 Opponents who have had a substantial involvement in the work of doctorate student, or whose work is the very focus of research project;

Criterion 8 A dissertations copy is given to every opponent, giving enough time to read it and to write a separate report. Opponents should not communicate among themselves, with doctorate student or its scientific supervisor during this period. Opponents must verify the authenticity of data used in dissertation, observance of scientific research practice as well citations of scientific research works and articles of other authors;

Criterion 9 Opponents express clearly that scientific paper is free of plagiarism. If they notice and find that this has happened, they ask for termination of

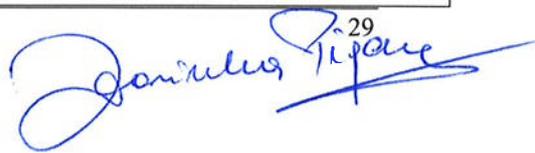
None of the doctoral students had completed his/her doctoral dissertation at the time of the site visit. One of the students was at an advanced stage of the thesis (affirmation during the interview and as confirmed by supervisor), the other two had completed nearly 2/3 and 1/3 of the thesis, respectively.

As to *conference presentations* the following data emerge:

Of the three doctoral students, two have participated and presented their work in three conferences (including an International Conference on Interdisciplinary Studies organized in Tirana) and their presentations are published in the conference proceedings. I do not have evidence of conference presentations for the third candidate. According to a document on progress of doctoral students provided by the DSP, this candidate has presented his/her work in three national conferences, but there is no formal evidence to support this.

As far as *publications* are concerned: one candidate has a publication of 2016 in the journal "Reforma" which does not seem to have an editorial board. Her conference presentations are published as conference proceedings. The other candidate has two publications; one article has been published in a journal in which the doctoral student is the publisher (given the fact that the doctoral student is the owner of a HEI with a journal) and the other article is published in the Academic Journal which has an editorial board. The third doctoral student has listed and submitted four publications: one article on "Parties in the leasing contract..." (2014) is published in the Journal Politikja, whereas as far as the other two articles/papers are concerned, it is not possible to identify the journal in which they are published (no title or other detail of the journal is mentioned in the documents that are submitted for review). As a result, it is recommended that the evaluation of doctoral students takes into account with the necessary care the situation of presentations and publications of the doctoral students, even more so as these are explicit criteria of legislation in force.

One of the most problematic issues that needs to be addressed is the lack of any research visit/exchange to other research institutions/centres abroad or within Albania. Whereas it was evident that the HEI (AU) has offered this possibility to doctoral students, none of them has made use of it. The common reason that was put forward is personal/work circumstances. This was also evident during the meeting with doctoral students. It is recommended that measures are taken to encourage

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dissertation assessment;

Criterion 10 Dissertation is accompanied by a summary, about 10 pages in English. This review is published in the official website of the institution, in the section designated for information for this study;

Criterion 11 Scientific supervisor of the student should not be an opponent;

Criterion 12 When opponents have completed their reports, they are called by the Dean and Head of Board of Professors to agree to conduct oral examination;

Criterion 13 It is recommended, that a jury member of doctorate examination be from universities known in the world for quality and rich research and publishing activities in the relevant field, which has at least the scientific degree "Doctor" awarded in the scientific field in which doctorate student follows the studies and over 5 years academic and research experience. This criterion may not be applied to Albanological sciences. Assessment of doctorate student in examination is made open by consensus, provided that all members are pronounced for a passing grade. Even if one member has evaluated doctorate student by convincing arguments, with a failing grade, the final outcome will be failing;

Criterion 14 Opponents submit to dean of unit that organizes the program of doctorate studies and chairperson of doctorate examination jury a copy of their individual reports;

Criterion 15 Dissertation defense for obtaining the diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is public. It is announced at least 4 weeks before and it is done in the presence of department interested members, students and teachers in the relevant Higher Education Institution;

Criterion 16 Evaluations that opponents can make include: granting diploma of scientific degree "Doctor", or resubmission of written scientific research paper after completion of their recommendations, or a further extension of study program, or denial of diploma for scientific degree "Doctor";

Criterion 17 A copy of dissertation of student who received a diploma for scientific degree "Doctor" is deposited in library of faculty, research institute, university research centers, university where study program is carried out and scientific paper and a copy in National Library. Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without dissertation being deposited in aforementioned institutions, published in paper and on disk (CD) and without making it public in the official website of respective higher education institution;

Criterion 18 Scientific degree "Doctor" is not issued without being registered in National Register of Doctorates of Securities Commission Academic

student mobility, given also the fact that the HEI has cooperation agreements with foreign universities.

Last but not least, the limited resources in the library may have a negative effect on the quality of research performed by doctoral students. This can be seen in their conference proceedings/articles that in general do not contain a variety of national and European sources. This was also evident during the meetings with doctoral students who could mainly refer to some national titles in their respective fields but were not able to refer to a short list of the most relevant international publications/journals/monographs in their area of expertise. This is even more pertinent given that they all aim to take a comparative approach in their doctoral work. Thus it is recommended that measures are taken to improve the quality and quantity of titles in the library.

Criteria 6-18 are not applicable to the present analysis as there has been no case so far of doctoral students who have submitted their doctoral thesis.



Conclusions of EEG:

▪ The DSP meets the general criteria of design, implementation and continuous monitoring. It is a third cycle programme and after successful completion of the theoretical year, students obtain 60 EC. During this year students obtain general and specialized knowledge in the field of European contract law. This knowledge will serve them as a theoretical basis for drafting and completing their research project. At the end of the theoretical year doctoral students have to obtain 80% of the points in the general exam in order to pass to the second year of the doctoral programme. In general the syllabi provide a good basis for the theoretical year. However, it is recommended that the following elements are taken into account in order to improve the syllabi and courses in general:

a) firstly, courses should contain both elements of practice and theory: they should give students the sound theoretical background on academic discussion in their field.

b) Lecturers should make sure that mandatory and recommended literature is up-to-date

c) The assessment scheme should be more specific, clear and transparent

d) Courses are taught by staff specialized or who do research in that particular field

▪ Applicants to the DSP have submitted a research proposal that has been evaluated. After completion of the first theoretical year, the Council of Professors has approved the theses topics and supervisors for those successful doctoral students who were entitled to pass to the second year of the DSP (Decision 313/1 of 5 May 2014, Council of Professors of Albanian University). Research proposals correspond to the scientific profile of the DSP.

▪ In theory the DSP is part of a research project within the HEI "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies" but there is no evidence of the concrete output of this project and the impact it has had on the DSP as such.

▪ Student's work is evaluated continuously. The most important avenue for this is the doctoral day and the report submitted at the end of the second year. However, it is strongly recommended that the doctoral day takes a more institutionalized form and most importantly, that all supervisors take part in these meetings. Continues progress is assessed and made known to successful candidates so far. However, the status of two non-active doctoral students is not clear. Measures should be taken in this regard.

▪ Last but not least, the research activity of doctoral students in the form of presentations and publications should be assessed carefully. Furthermore, measures should be taken to encourage students mobility. And finally, the library should be improved so that it does not negatively affect the quality of research.

Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution

✓ Information on doctoral days

✓ Research activity of doctoral students

✓ Information on the progress of doctoral students

8. Teaching – Learning outcome (in first year)

Description part

Terma reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG **should analyze and evaluate** the: organization, teaching methods, quality of workload and realisation of it, teaching technologies,

internal evaluation of teaching, students' participation in the activities of the doctoral school, control of student knowledge, student scientific leadership etj.

Teaching in the first year is a combination of lectures, seminars and mid-term and final tests. The small number of students may allow for interactive sessions. Students evaluate their courses at the end of the semester based on evaluation forms prepared by the IQAU (for more on this evaluation see above on the IQAU). Students' assessment during the theoretical year is done through a grade for each course which consists of participation; mid-term tests; and final exam.

Measurable indicators:

- Students' workload, forms of teaching

Table 10

Forms of teaching	Class hours for
Lecture	420
Seminars	147
Exercises	
Laboratories	25
Practice for subjects	8
Professional practice	
Total	600

During the visit at the Department's secretary, we checked the Registry and concluded that all class hours as described above were completed.

Assessment of learning outcomes according to course syllabi

Table 11

Learning Outcomes control ³	in %
Active participation in lectures, seminars, etc.	10%-20%
Implementation of obligations (laboratory course tasks, essays)	
Intermediate tests	20%-40%
Final exam	40%-60%
Etc	
In total	100%

Students' participation in research activities of the University/Faculty/DSP

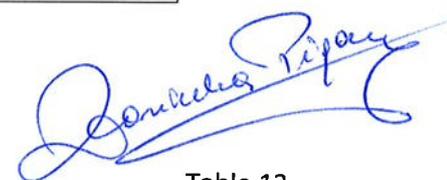


Table 12

HEI scientific activity	Number of students activated
For individual Papers of Lectures	-
For scientific projects of Faculty / Department / Doctoral School	-

³ According to syllabi

For research projects, in collaboration with other

-

There is no evidence that students have participated in any research/scientific activity of the University/Faculty or DSP

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.2 - Continuous increase of theoretical level and promotion of students' team work are targets of a study program of third cycle, doctorate.	
<p>Criterion 1 Level of scientific research development helps in student training to complete the study program successfully;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Students have the opportunity to participate in various research activities closely related to the specific area in which they attend doctorate studies, which help him/her to be trained for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Acquisition of research methodologies for independent creative activities, such as scientific articles, presentations, standard approach for references, bibliography, indexes and content writing as the basis for doctor a thesis processing;b) Independent work in laboratory;c) Use of information resources (e.g. libraries and Internet) and information management;d) Use of modern technologies for public presentations;e) Acquisition of advanced methods of analysis and data processing;f) Learning and mastery of specialized terminology associated with the research field of doctorate student; <p>Criterion 3 Doctorate students participate in foreseen activities young and their research work. A doctorate student is free to participate as a listener or as a speaker in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Lectures;b) Seminars;c) Interdisciplinary debates, organized in the framework of doctorate study program;d) Other possibilities of learning such as following presentations of post doctorate students and research projects, even when it is not related directly to the student's research interest.e) Scientific mentors advise students to take part in scientific activities and conferences that help them in their scientific research; <p>Criterion 4 Students have gained skills for appropriate communication with a scientific level (<i>Student's communication skills include: the competency to write clearly and with an appropriate style, use of persuasive arguments and clear</i></p>	<p>Students of this DSP have the opportunity and obligation to participate in various research activities related to their area of research and that contribute to their academic training. Thanks to one of the courses in the theoretical year, students are exposed to methodological skills in doing research. The rest of the courses equip them with theoretical knowledge and lecturers expose them to relevant literature in the field. Students are allowed and encouraged to participate in academic events or to perform research abroad. However, it seems that this is an unexplored option by the students for personal/professional circumstances (interviews with students). Students are given the possibility to develop their teaching skills; two of them teach at the Law Department of AU and the other student is engaged as lecturer in another University.</p> 

articulation of ideas before the public concerned; the ability to debate and support others, involved in teaching, supervision or demonstrations);

Criterion 5 Students have acquired the ability to communicate correctly with others, and necessary skill for a scholar, but also in other situations (*being able to develop and maintain cooperation and working relationships with others, awareness that their behavior affects them and others and be willing to listen, to give and to take reactions and responses with sharpness*);

Criterion 6 Development of communication skills of doctorate students encouraged them to be engaged in teaching in study programs of first and second cycle (e.g. by engaging in teaching as lecturers, in support of professors guiding their thesis).

Conclusions of EEG:

The DSP encourages the continuous development of research skills of doctoral students. Moreover, it is suggested that students become part of the research agenda or ongoing research projects at the level of University or Faculty

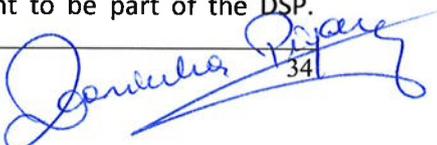
9. Doctoral students

Description part

Terms of reference: *Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: academic criteria and procedures for enrollment of doctoral student, quality of students enrolled, the number of students enrolled and who has finished in years, average duration of doctoral studies (in years), statistics, collaboration with students who have received diploma, student's information.*

According to the documents provided by AU (Data on applicants academic year 2013-2014, European Contract Law), in the academic year 2013-2014 there have been four individuals interested in the DSP and five effective applicants from which four were accepted to the DSP. The Council of Professors of AU with its decision No. 1 of 4 March 2013 established the Committee for the Assessment of Applicants to the Doctoral Study Programmes for 2013-2014. This Committee with its decision of 15 March 2013 decided for the admission to the DSP of four candidates. The Committee with its decision of 4 March 2013 decided for the admission to the DSP and transfer of credits for a fifth candidate. The transfer of credits concerned seven courses out of nine of the DSP study programme, thus this doctoral student had to follow and complete the remaining two courses. This transfer of credits procedure is in line with Art. 23 of the DSP Regulation. Thus in March 2013, the DSP had five enrolled students, one of which from Kosovo. There are no other international students in the DSP.

According to Decision No. 313 of 5 May 2014, the Council of Professors of AU decided for the admission to the second year of these five students. On the same day, with decision No. 313/1, the Council of Professors approved the doctoral thesis titles and supervisors for the five doctoral students. With Decision No. 212 of 17 June 2015, the Council of Professors decided for the admission to the third year of the DSP of the three out of five doctoral students. For the two remaining doctoral students, initially enrolled in the DSP, there was no evidence of their withdrawal or exclusion from the DSP. Nor was there evidence of a decision by the Council of Professors determining the academic status of these students. According to conversations with the Head of the Law Department, one of the students had not been present in any of the doctoral days and in accordance with Art. 27(4) of the DSP Regulation, he/she loses the right to be part of the DSP.

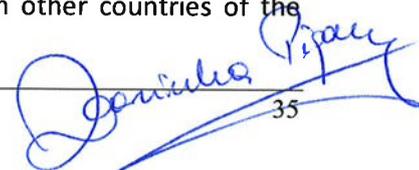

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Similarly, the other doctoral students had been present only in the first doctoral day and the same provision of the DSP applied in that case. However, there is no written or documented evidence of these students not being part of the programme anymore; also the Registry does not contain any note concerning their status. It is advisable to keep a clear track record of the students enrolled and to document any change in the status of doctoral students. *De facto*, at the time of the site visit by the external expert, there were three doctoral students enrolled in the DSP. This number is in line with Art. 17(2) of the DSP Regulation.

At the time of the visit, which corresponds to the end of the third academic year and the start of the fourth academic year, no doctoral student had submitted his/her doctoral thesis for defence. According to student's and staff's testimony, the level of progress differs: one of the doctoral students has progressed in a considerable manner and may be able to submit the thesis in due course, whereas the other two have completed approximately (respectively) 1/3 and 2/3 of the doctoral thesis. In general, conference participation and presentations so far have reflected the research of the doctoral students; the same can be said for their publications. One major shortcoming, is the absence of student mobility in terms of research visits/periods at academic institutions/universities/research centres or other institutions (such as EU institutions as the DSP is about European contract law)

Measurable indicators:

- ☑ Statistical data for doctoral students:
 - The total number of PhDs students and the number for each year
For academic year 2013-2014 there have been 5 doctoral students enrolled in the programme
At the time of the site visit (October 2016) there were three active doctoral students
 - The number of PhDs students coming from outside of the university
All current doctoral students come from outside the university
 - Number of graduates each year
There have been no graduates so far
 - The average duration of doctoral studies and what has been the trend of this indicator;
At the time of the site visit, students were completing their third year of the doctoral studies. No student has submitted his/her doctoral thesis.
 - Number and percentage of students, who have interrupted his doctoral studies.
There is no formal decision of the Council of Professors in this regard. Yet, according to data obtained during the visit, two out of five doctoral students are not active any more in the DSP (40%)
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from Kosovo, Albanian territories, as well as from the Albanian diaspora;
Currently, there is one doctoral student coming from Kosovo (30%)
 - Number and percentage of foreign students, who come from the Balkan region;
Currently, there are no foreign students coming from the Balkan region
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from EU countries;
There are no doctoral students coming from EU countries
 - Number and percentage of students, who come from other countries of the world


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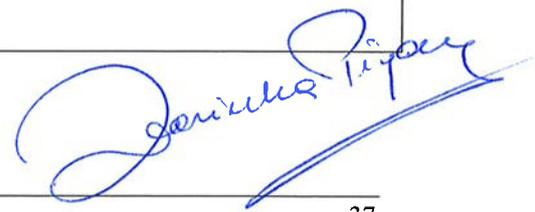
The number of students coming from other countries in the world is zero.

- EEG should analyze and evaluate the information for the mobility of doctoral students at universities abroad
 - No doctoral student has been part of any mobility programme at universities or other research centres abroad
- Analyses and evaluation of data for the final evaluation of doctoral students
- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
 - ✓ Data on applications to the DSP
 - ✓ Decisions of the Council of Professors concerning the enrollement of students to the second and third year of the DSP

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard I.3 - Admission of students in a doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 1 The student admitted to doctorate study program has completed second study cycle with average grade (> 80% of points) and was awarded the university degree "Master of Science"/ "Master of Fine Arts" or an equivalent degree, following completion of university studies that include a scientific thesis evaluated with 30-40 ECTS;</p> <p>Criterion 2 Candidate who applies to continue the third cycle program, the doctorate, has profound theoretical knowledge in the relevant field of study. Some basic knowledge that doctorate student has is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creative thinking; b) Development of critical sense about research; c) Connections between different fields of research; d) Skills developed for solving problems arising during research work; e) Competence to manage research complexity and to propose new ideas in research field; <p>Criterion 3 The student admitted to doctorate study program is ready to apply in practice the knowledge gained from research in relevant field of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 4 Student owns the English language certified in the international level, at least "C1", based on internationally recognized tests and a second foreign language as French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian. In social sciences it may be Latin, Ancient Greek, Persian or other languages needed for research in the area;</p> <p>Criterion 5 Professors' Council set the criteria for admission to program of doctorate studies contained</p>	<p>Admission of students in the DSP generally complies with Standard I.3 for the following reasons:</p> <p>With the exception of one candidate, the other candidates were admitted to the DSP with an average grade of >8 after the completion of university studies as required by the law.</p> <p>All candidates had submitted a research proposal reflecting the ability of candidates to identify a research question and their critical thinking. From the observations of the successful candidates' files, it emerged that only one of the five candidates had submitted a language diploma at the time of application. As far as the other candidates are concerned, such language document was not found in the files. The files of successful candidates contained the following documents: the admission decision by the Council of Professors, university diplomas of first and second level, two reference letters for each candidate, certificate of current employment, letter of motivation, CV, and the research proposal.</p>

<p>in regulation of doctorate program of studies;</p> <p>Criterion 6 The applicant has received detailed information about doctorate program of study, before being admitted into it. He is fully informed regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Duration of study program; b) Conditions that student should meet before appearing in doctorate exam; c) Support that institution provides to the student through administrative and research structures for activities envisaged in the study program (laboratories, libraries, etc.). d) Modalities of exercise of research or creative activity of doctorate students, especially with regard to preparation of doctorate thesis; <p>Criterion 7 Admission criteria include also interviews and supports that can be provided by references and additional documents;</p> <p>Criterion 8 Admission policies include also doctorate admission exam.</p>	
<p>Standard III.2 - Quantitative aspects of doctorate study program</p>	
<p>Total number of registered doctorate students and doctorate number for each year;</p> <p>Number of registered doctorate students coming from outside the unit that has opened the doctorate study program;</p> <p>Number of diplomas issued to receive "Doctor" degree for each year;</p> <p>Average duration of doctorate studies and trend of this indicator;</p> <p>Number and percentage of those who gave up doctorate studies in the level of study program.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the DSP there have been 5 registered students. Currently, there are only three active doctoral students. Four of the five registered students came from outside the HEI. At the time of the writing of this report the new academic year 2016-2017 has started. This is the fourth academic year for the DSP under review here. No student has submitted the final draft of the doctoral thesis for public defence. There are two "inactive" students, who have not been present during the doctoral days and seem to have lost the right to follow the programme. However, there is no formal decision by the Council of Professors determining their status.</p>
<p>Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program</p>	
<p>Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Kosovo and other areas where Albanians live and Albanian Diaspora;</p> <p>Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from Balkans region.</p> <p>Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from the EU countries;</p> <p>Number, expressed in percentage, of registered doctorate students coming from other countries of the world;</p>	<p>20% of registered doctoral students are from Kosovo.</p> <p>There are no students coming from the Balkans, the EU or other countries.</p>



Conclusions of EEG:

In general, the admissions process was administered according to the rules. To a large extent files were complete with the exception of the language diploma for some candidates. Only one candidate had submitted his/her language diploma at the moment of registration. No language diplomas were found in the files at the time of the site visit. In one case, the average grade of the registered candidate was lower than 8. 20% of doctoral students are from abroad, namely Kosovo.

At the start of the fourth academic year, no student has submitted the final draft of the doctoral thesis for public defence.

There are two "inactive" students, who have not been present during the doctoral days and seem to have lost the right to follow the programme. However, there is no formal decision by the Council of Professors determining their status.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POLICIES

10. Research in doctoral school and involvement of doctoral students

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: research policies of HEI /Doctoral School, publications over the years, acquired and implemented projects, participation of doctoral student in activities at home and abroad, the activities organized by the unit, etc..

According to the DSP Regulation, it is for the Council of Professors to lead the design and implementation of a research strategy. From the documents received after the visit, there is no evidence of such a strategy. However, one can mention the research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies" authored by the Institute of Scientific Research and Development of AU and with a duration 72 months (2012-2018). One of the objectives of this research project is to explore the national legal framework of contract law and how to approximate it to EU law. Thus the DSP seems to be part of this research project, although there is no evidence of the continuation of this project or its academic output.

AU publishes the academic journal OPTIME (ISSN 2220-461X), an academic journal with an editorial board. The most recent number that I could access online is that of January 2013. According to documents obtained, no doctoral student has published in this journal (contrary to what the SER states on pg. 87). As mentioned in the part concerning doctoral students, these have participated in national and international conferences

Measurable indicators:

Research data (including publications, research projects, scientific activities)

Table 13

Planned activities, individual and institution, who are involved in doctoral students		Number	The titles of scientific journals, projects, research activities
1.	Publications, where students have scientific articles		
2.	Research projects, acquired by leading professors or doctoral students		
3.	Projects Implemented		

4.	Scientific activities organized by the HEI		See SER pg. 87. Unfortunately, we did not manage to collect more information on these two activities.
5.	Participants in scientific activities		
6.	Students involved in research		
	etc		

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
- ✓ Publications of doctoral students
- ✓ Participation of doctoral students in conferences and official certificates
- ✓ Research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies" Institute of Scientific Research and Development of AU

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research	
<p>Criterion 1 A third cycle study program (doctorate) is integrated in research activity of Higher Education Institutions;</p> <p>Criterion 4 The institution has the capacity to perform supervision of each doctorate student in research activities and respective didactic duties;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Academic staff must show achievements in the research field through such creative activities as: presentations, scientific publications, magazines, books or monographs;</p> <p>Criterion 7 Indicators of high level research activity are publications that contain statements from publishing and scientific research activity by other scholars outside doctorate study program, especially international, regarding the outcome of scientific research in the institution that offers doctorate programs;</p>	<p>The DSP is part of the research project "A complex approach to sustainable development from an Albanian perspective: challenges and strategies" authored by the Institute of Scientific Research and Development of AU and with a duration 72 months (2012-2018). However, there is no evidence of research output in the context of this project. The DSP has capacities for scientific research and they are mainly reflected in individual research of academic staff, publication by the HEI of an academic journal and organization of scientific conferences. However, a research strategy seems to be lacking.</p> <p>The DSP, with its FAS and PAS has the capacity to supervise doctoral students. In addition FAS and PAS reflect their research activity in numerous publications, at the national and international level.</p>
<p><u>Conclusions of EEG:</u></p> <p>The DSP has good potential in individual research of its FAS and PAS. It is recommended that the HEI and more specifically the DSP improves its research profile by drafting a research strategy, making sure that there is a synergy of research activities in concrete projects with a concrete outcome.</p>	

11. National and international cooperation, in function of doctoral study

Description part

Terms of reference: Based on the SER and visits to institutions, EEG should analyze and evaluate the: Doctoral School's cooperation with institutions /national or international research organizations, invited academic staff, etc.

According to the SER and statements obtained during the site visit the AU has signed numerous agreements of cooperation with national and international institutions. These institutions range from partner Albanian Universities, international universities, national law enforcement institutions etc. Perhaps of most relevance to the the DSP are agreements between the AU and the University of Palermo, University of Pisa, Univeristy of Aquila and Sigmund Freud University (Vienna). According to the SER the main mode of cooperation with these academic institutions is the "exchange of academic staff and doctoral students, as well as the implementation of joint research projects." (SER, pg. 83)

As an example, the Agreement with the University of Palermo includes:

- Cooperation in joint research projects, involving the movement of researchers and professors from both universities and mobility of young researchers and/or graduates engaged in postgraduate programs, exchanging scientific materials;
- Mobility of students for periods of at least one semester, according to a programme that specifies the number of students, financial modalities, possible granting of scholarships, relocation and recognition of academic credits; mobility of staff etc;
- Joint participation in programmes/research proposals

According to information obtained during the site visit and according to documents obtained after it, it emerges that the DSP has concretely benefitted from the cooperation agreement with the University of Palermo, more specifically by having two academic staff from that University teaching two courses at the DSP. We have no evidence of other exchange of academic staff or doctoral students. Also we have no evidence of a joint research project or programme.

Measurable indicators:

Scientific activities in the context of national and international cooperation

Table 14

Scientific activities in the framework of international cooperation		
1	Number of students participating as partners in national and international projects	-
2	Number of Students participating in scientific activities, outside of HEI / presentations abroad	2
3	The number of foreign lecturers, who are invited to teaching	2
4	The number of classes held by invited foreign lecturers	2 (courses)
5	Number of participants in training, in the field of abroad research	-
6	Mobility of students to and from HEI	-
7	The number of international awards in the field of research	-

Cooperation Agreements with national and international insitutions

Data according to cooperation agreements signed between the AU and other partner institutions

Table 15

Institutions and scientific organizations, which is cooperating with	
Ministry of Justice (according to SER, but not found in the file)	Type of cooperation / research
Constitutional Court (according to SER, but not found in the file)	Type of cooperation / research
Tirana District Court, The Court of Serious Crimes	Type of cooperation / research
Tirana District Prefecture	The organization of joint scientific events
National Chamber of Mediators	
State Archives	Type of cooperation / research
National Library	Research, theoretical support for the implementation of doctoral topics
Bodies and institutions of educational and research in the field of European contract law and European law to contact the University of Tirana (this is according to the SER, but not found in the files)	
Center for Legal and Civic Initiatives	Research, practical support for the implementation of doctoral topics
University of Studies, Palermo	Academic staff exchange
University of Palermo, Italy	Academic staff exchange
University of Sigmund Freud in Vienna	Academic staff exchange

- Relevant documents, taken during visits to the institution
- ✓ A copy of cooperation agreements

Evaluation according to the Standards

Standards/criterion	Evaluation according to standards
Standard III.4 - Internationalization of doctorate study program	
<p>Criterion 5 Doctorate study program encourages doctorate mobility by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for academic training outside doctorate study program;</p> <p>Criterion 6 Doctorate study program encourages mobility of doctorate students by paying a considerable amount of expenditures for presentation of research results in national and international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress);</p> <p>Criterion 7 The institution has an agreement, at least with one Western university, guaranteeing programs of exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and realization of joint research projects. For Albanological Sciences cooperation could also be with a Higher Education Institution or research centre in Kosovo and lands where Albanians live;</p> <p>Criterion 8 Doctorate study program creates the necessary space to develop joint doctorate study programs with homologous universities in the</p>	<p>The AU has made efforts to internationalize the DSP by signing international cooperation agreements with international partner Universities. However, it is recommended that concrete measures are taken so that cooperation with international universities goes beyond teaching by international academic staff.</p> <p>From statements of internal staff and doctoral students during the site visit, we learned that the DSP does encourage doctoral student mobility for academic training outside the concerned institution. The amount of budget on this was not specified. As mentioned above in this report, according to the financial report, the amount for scientific research is 200000 AL per academic year. However, the major difficulty in this regard remains the fact that doctoral students do not make use of these possibilities, not for financial reasons, but for personal/professional circumstances. Professional</p>

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<p>region, Europe and beyond;</p> <p>Criterion 9 Doctorate study program provides for 3-4 modules (not less than 15 ECTS) to be conducted, organized in theoretical studies and doctorate students have the exam by professors of partner universities, known in the world, for quality and research, publishing activities in the relevant field of study. Exception cited in criterion 7 applies for Albanological Sciences;</p> <p>Criterion 10 Doctorate study program promotes involvement of professors from foreign universities as scientific supervisors or as scientific collaborators of doctorate students.</p>	<p>circumstances refer to the fact that doctoral students are in employment (judiciary, academia) and it is impossible for them to leave for long periods of research. This can be seen as a shortcoming of the actual situation of the DSP and an element that should be improved in the future.</p> <p>As mentioned previously in this report, in the budget of the DSP there is a section on scientific research which amounts to 200000AL per academic year, but it is not specified whether this covers (also) presentations by doctoral students in international conferences. Furthermore, seeing this amount covers all doctoral students and may include expenses at international conferences, one cannot say that this is a considerable amount. It is recommended that the HEI and the DSP increases the amount for scientific research or dedicates a special amount to doctoral students and there research.</p> <p>The institution has signed several cooperation agreements with international partner institutions. However, it is recommended that these cooperations go beyond the teaching of courses at the DSP by international academic staff. Teaching by international academic staff of partner universities covers two courses which amount to 16 EC (thus in line with criterion 9). So far, no international academic staff is engaged in thesis supervision, at least not formally.</p>
<p>Standard II.1 - Capacities for scientific research</p>	
<p>Criterion 5 The institution has agreements with other academic or research institutions at home and abroad, supporting the exchange of academic staff and doctorate students and academic and research activities of doctorate school;</p>	<p>The HEI has concluded various agreements with academic and non-academic institutions, at home and abroad, in order to support exchange of staff and doctoral students.</p>
<p>Conclusions of EEG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AU has signed several cooperation agreements with international and national partner institutions. The former include universites. However, it is recommended that concrete measures are taken so that cooperation with international universities goes beyond teaching by international academic staff. ▪ The DSP does encourage doctoral student mobility for academic training outside the concerned institution. However, the major difficulty in this regard remains that fact that doctoral students do not make use of these possibilities, not for financial reasons, but for personal/professional circumstances. Furthermore, it is recommended that the HEI and the DSP increases the amount for scientific research or dedicates a special amount to doctoral students and there research. 	

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

1. Teaching design

The courses chosen for the theoretical year give students a solid basis for later designing and developing their research projects. These courses equip them with methodological tools for doing research as well as substantive tools for better understanding the relevant field and for engaging in an in-depth analysis of the concerned areas.

2. Quality FAS and PAS

The DSP engages qualitative researchers as FAS and PAS. Also, in general, thesis supervision is performed by adequate and well-known academic staff.

3. Organization of doctoral days

The organization of doctoral days is a very good practice which encourages doctoral students to work on a continuous basis on their thesis. Furthermore, it constitutes a platform in which doctoral students present and discuss their work and receive feedback from peers and academic staff.

4. Administrative support

The HEI shows a great deal of willingness to design and implement a good DSP. All structures engaged in the DSP, especially the Law Department, make efforts in providing the necessary administrative support to the DSP.

Weaknesses

1. Research facilities

The HEI and the DSP provides limited research facilities to doctoral students. The majority of titles in the library concern domestic legislation and academic literature, and access to international academic literature is very limited. This is problematic as all research projects of doctoral students take a comparative approach.

2. Research design and strategy

The HEI should strengthen its research strategy, especially as far as the DSP is concerned. There seems to be no research strategy, rather a research project designed by an Institute within the HEI and the DSP is part of it. The DSP under the umbrella of the HEI should make use and benefit from the various research funding opportunities available locally or internationally. There is no evidence that this has been done so far.

3. Internationalization of DSP, especially through mobility of doctoral students

The HEI has concluded various cooperation agreement with national and international (academic and non-academic) institutions. However, they do not seem to have a concrete impact on DSP academic staff and doctoral students, apart from teaching of two foreign professors at the programme. The main means of internationalization of the DSP are teaching performed by international academic staff and presentation by some doctoral students in international conferences. There are no cases of mobility of doctoral students and this is a shortcoming of the DSP.

4. Lack of stability of academic staff

At the time of the theoretical year (academic year 2013-2104) full-time academic staff represented less than 60% of academic staff engaged at the DSP. This is less than required by regulations in force. Moreover, since then the number of full-time academic staff has decreased further. As noticed by the representatives of the HEI, stability of academic staff is a great challenge for the HEI.

Opportunities

1. A focused doctoral programme

The DSP is designed as a programme focusing on European contract law, thus allowing for a focus and further specialization in research. If well developed, the DSP may transform the HEI into a national research centre for the study of (European) contract law.

2. A plethora of research grant applications

There are a number of research grant applications available to HEI-s in general (such as Horizon 2020 or Erasmus+, just to mention a few) and AU and the DSP should make use these opportunities as they may create further synergies within the University/Faculty/DSP and between the University/Faculty/DSP and international partners.

Threats

1. Number FAS

As noted also by the Rector of the University, one of the problems faced by the HEI is the lack of stability for staff. This seems to be reflected within the DSP as well.

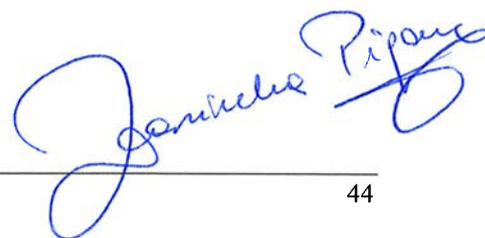
2. Frequent change of Albanian legislative framework on Higher Albanian Education

Frequent law reforms, incomplete legislative frameworks and more specifically the suspension of new registrations in doctoral programmes may disrupt the continuous development of the DSP.

Recommendations:

As far as the management and administration of the DSP are concerned, the following recommendations are submitted:

- It is recommended that in case there is new regulation “unfreezing” new registrations to doctoral programmes and within the possibilities of the HEI, the DSP is developed within a separate structure as a Doctoral School. This would allow the programme to make use of separate and more dedicated institutional/administrative/human resources and facilities and increase the quality.
- The DSP has defined its short, medium and long-term strategies. However, it is recommended that these strategies are clearly defined and better suited to the nature and needs of the DSP. Thus as mentioned above “the legal organization of contractual law” seems to correspond better to a long-term strategy as the Albanian legal system may benefit from research output of this DSP; on the other hand preparation of doctoral students may be better suited as a short-term strategy.
- It is recommended that there is a clear track record of *all* the students enrolled in the DSP and that any change in their status as doctoral students is well documented. The situation of the two out of five students initially enrolled in the DSP is not clear and it is recommended that immediate measures are taken in this regard.
- The DSP has the potential of benefitting from many international and national institutional cooperation agreements. However, it is recommended that they become concrete and that they affect staff and especially doctoral student’s mobility.



- Concerning the self-evaluation report, it is recommended that the DSP Regulation is amended accordingly in order to reflect the obligation that that report should be reviewed by the Council of Professors and that this rule is enforced in practice.

As far as the academic organization of the DSP is concerned, it is recommended that the HEI takes immediate measures to ensure the stability of the governing of the DSP, by filling any vacancy in the governing bodies, such as the Council of Professors. Also, it is strongly recommended that membership of the Board (concerning titles among members of the Council of Professors) is brought in line with legislation in force.

As far as quality of academic and administrative staff is concerned, the following recommendations are submitted:

- During academic year 2013-2014 the DSP had sufficient academic staff with scientific titles to deliver teaching in all nine theoretical subjects. However, full-time academic staff represented less than 60% of staff thus measures should be taken to remedy this situation. Moreover, a higher number of FAS would guarantee a more sustainable research profile of the programme.
- The DSP should make sure that the match between the thesis profile of doctoral students and the research profile of the supervisor is guaranteed to the fullest.
- Academic staff engages in research and research output is visible nationally and to a smaller extent internationally. However, the institution should emphasise the importance of quality research.

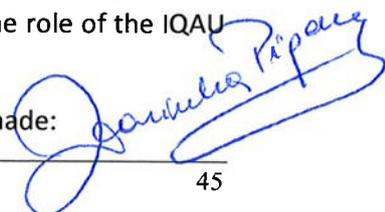
As far as facilities, infrastructure and logistics are concerned it is recommended that immediate measures are taken to enrich the library with national/international titles directly related to the DSP (which at the moment are lacking) as well as to add to the online library the most basic titles of publications or databases directly related to the DSP.

As far as financial resources and management thereof are concerned, the following recommendations are submitted:

- It is recommended that in the future the DSP or the HEI ensures other stable sources of financing apart from tuition and drafts a strategy for external funding.
- If research is understood as including mobility of doctoral students for research stay, expenses for presentation of research and expenses for organizing conference at the HEI or DSP, the budget seems limited and measures should be taken to increase it.
- There is no evidence of external research funding (national or international) and it is strongly recommended that the HEI and the DSP define a strategy for external funding. This would improve research visibility and output as well as could contribute to having more alternative financial resources for the DSP.

As far as the assurance of quality of programmes is concerned, it is recommended that the IQAU reviews and complete its quality assurance procedure, by especially making sure that there is a clear follow-up stage to each evaluation of programmes by students. Furthermore, it is advisable to add another layer of evaluation/assessment between the first/theoretical year and the completion of the doctoral studies. In addition, concrete measures should be taken at the University level in order to clarify the position of the IQAU vis-a-vis other offices and to strengthen the role of the IQAU in the evaluation process.

As far as the study programme is concerned the following recommendations are made:

Signature


▪ In general the course syllabi provide a good basis for the theoretical year. However, courses and syllabi may be improved by taking into account the following elements:

a) Courses should contain both elements of practice and theory: they should give students the sound theoretical background on academic discussion in their field.

b) Lecturers should make sure that mandatory and recommended literature is up-to-date

c) The assessment scheme should be more specific, clear and transparent

d) Courses are taught by staff specialized or who do research in that particular field

▪ Doctoral days constitute an important platform for the continuous evaluation of Student's work. However, it is strongly recommended that doctoral days take a more institutionalized form and most importantly, that all supervisors take part in these meetings. Last but not least, the research activity of doctoral students in the form of presentations and publications should be assessed carefully by scrutinizing the match between their presentations/publications and research focus as well as by assessing the quality and reputation of journals or conferences in which researchers present their work. Furthermore, measures should be taken to encourage students mobility. And finally, the library should be improved so that it does not negatively affect the quality of research.

As far as doctoral students are concerned, it is recommended that rules concerning language skills and average grades for entering the programme are enforced accordingly.

As far as the research profile of the programme is concerned, it is recommended that the HEI and more specifically the DSP improves its research profile by drafting a research strategy, making sure that there is a synergy of research activities in concrete projects with a concrete outcome.

Last but not least, as far as internationalization and international research cooperation is concerned, it is recommended that concrete measures are taken so that cooperation with international universities goes beyond teaching by international academic staff. In addition, the DSP does encourage doctoral student mobility for academic training outside the concerned institution. However, the major difficulty in this regard remains that fact that doctoral students do not make use of these possibilities, not for financial reasons, but for personal/professional circumstances. Furthermore, it is recommended that the HEI and the DSP increases the amount for scientific research or dedicates a special amount to doctoral students and their research.

External Evaluation Group:

Dr. Darinka Piqani
Leiden University, The Netherlands

