



Accreditation of Study Programmes
Assessment Report

Institution: The State University of Moldova

Study programme: Professional Master in Civil Judicial Procedures

Assessment committee:

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Dates of the assessment visit: 20/05/15

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 10.07.2015

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: No comments for this report

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

Date: 07.09.2015

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

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

General Introduction:

The State University of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as SUM) is a state higher education institution established in 1946 with a mission of educating qualified specialists able to adapt to the changing social and economic conditions, as well as conducting fundamental and applied scientific research and offering various continuous education training programmes. Since 2001, SUM holds the status of an autonomous National University granted by the Government of Moldova and constitutes a unitary, integral and indivisible academic, educational, scientific and cultural center.

As the largest University in Moldova, SUM is providing both full and part-time studies on a wide range of specialties at the Bachelor's level (1st cycle) and the Doctoral level (3rd cycle), and on 125 Master of Research and Professional Master study programmes (2nd cycle) with the corresponding duration of 2 and 1.5 years.

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The Law Faculty of SUM was founded in 1959 and continues to be the leading provider of specialists in law in Moldova. The Faculty consists of nine departments: Theory and History of Law, Constitutional Law and Administrative Law, International Law and Law of Foreign Economic Relations, Civil Procedure Law, Civil Law, Business Law, Criminal Law and Criminology, Labour Law and Criminal Procedure and Forensics, and is governed by the Council of the Faculty elected for a term of five years. In academic year 2014/15, SUM conducts studies on 12 Professional Master programmes in the field of law: “Business Law”, “Criminal Law”, “Criminal Procedure Law and Forensics”, Civil Law”, “Civil Judicial Procedures”, “National and European Enforcement Law”, “Labour Law”, “International Law”, “Human Rights”, “Informational Law”, “Customs Law” and “Public Law”.

The Professional Master programme “Civil Judicial Procedures”, which is being evaluated, is a programme with the duration of 1.5 years of studies, three semesters and 90 credits. The study programme was authorized in 2008 and actually launched in year 2010. The programme is managed by the Department of Law of Civil Procedure within the Faculty of Law.

Comments:

The study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. Considering the majority of the study disciplines within the programme as well as the learning outcomes of the curriculum the title of a study programme is consistent with its content. **However, it is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.**

The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework. The courses and study disciplines taught within the master’s programme are distinguishable from those offered on the bachelor’s study programme. Study disciplines are presented in a logical succession. Although the study programme in general follows the major trends of the labour market, it is still highly recommended to include courses on EU civil procedural law in the study programme, as well as put more emphasis in the curriculum on formulation of procedural acts and also professional ethics.

The academic staff has a strong sense of mission and is well aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.

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

The Faculty and Department regularly conduct surveys to evaluate learning process and outcomes. However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how students, alumni and employers are actually involved in the development process: The Department should have a clearer procedure to engage the students, alumni and employers in the development process.

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The meeting with teaching staff indicated that a variety of teaching methods are used, and they prefer to use active teaching methods. It is commendable that teaching staff publishes practical journal articles and teaching materials for their courses. Teaching staff is well aware of the need to keep up with the changes in legal regulations and recent court practice. Still, in order to provide a wider, comparative perspective, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature in the syllabi.

The University has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship. Students in general expressed satisfaction with organisation of internship. In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of civil procedural law.

It remains unclear how exactly the assessment methods are chosen and matched to learning outcomes and whether the students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

The necessary regulation appears to be in place for the recognition of prior learning, but there is no actual experience. The Department should consider the possibility of increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It provides more choices to students, but also increases the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility and therefore again makes academic mobility more attractive.

However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers also participate in the evaluation of study process. If they do not participate, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.

Although the students are already being encouraged to participate in scientific conferences and publish articles, the Department should find more ways to involve master students in current or future research projects (also in development activities).

At the moment, the qualification of full-time teaching staff does not fully comply with legal requirements as not all of them hold a PhD degree and only a few have had some international experience. However, the fact that some members of the teaching staff are also involved in practical legal activities related to the disciplines taught can be considered positive. Provided that there is no major overlapping of the same individuals in many of the master programmes under evaluation and the teaching staff involved in this master's programme do not have a significant involvement also in the bachelor's programmes, this should assure some consistency to the teaching process. Still, in order to meet the requirements established by legislation, all members of the academic staff involved in the study programme should as soon as possible finalize their PhD studies.

The members of the teaching staff have adequate teaching competence - the fact that most of them are involved also in practicing legal activities in field similar to disciplines taught is a positive as they can combine the practical experience with their teaching activities.

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Apart from implementing a MOODLE platform that provides some on-line training possibilities for academics and students, it appears that there are no other staff development measures implemented. At the Faculty management level, it is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers.

Members of the academic staff involved in this programme have not participated in teaching activities in other foreign institutions. The management should continuously support and encourage the members of the full-time teaching staff to regularly develop their knowledge and skills and participate in international mobility and networks. Measures should be taken to encourage and support the teaching staff to participate in the international research projects and other international scientific activities. Regular goals for the international cooperation should be set and the achievement of those goals should be measured regularly e.g. during quarterly performance reviews of the members of the academic staff. The Department of Law of Civil Procedure should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme.

Compared to internationally acceptable standards, the participation in the international research projects and other international scientific activity needs to be much more active. In order to achieve that, more resources should be found and allocated to research activities. **It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme.**

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

The students' satisfaction with the study programme is high and they have good informal relationship with the teaching staff.

At the moment, mobility options on the Civil Judicial Procedures study programme are very limited and the academic mobility is virtually non-existent. It is recommended to encourage master students to participate in academic mobility and focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities (for example, hold classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility). In order to help the University in its internationalization (and academic mobility) processes at the University and also at the Faculty level, it is advisable to consider updating and revising the webpage's content in English in order to attract foreign students.

To further support the students, MSU should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students – e.g consider to delegate the responsibility of study counselling from professors to trained specialists and also provide some sort of psychological counselling services for the students. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.

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The committee welcomes the use of modern software by MSU in order to discover plagiarism, yet this approach is only one aspect of plagiarism detection. Therefore, the committee urges the Faculty to adapt a unified and more systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and actively seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master's seminars etc).

Neither SER nor the additional documents provided more detailed data on the employment rate of the graduates It is recommended that the data regarding the employment of graduates should be collected be more regularly and systematically.

Although the graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements, it would be in the Faculty's best interests that the causes for dropping out would also be formally collected and analysed.

The budget planning in general is sustainable. However, the Faculty seems underfinanced, which according to the understanding of the committee is the reason for many shortcomings described above, e.g. the general salary level of the academic staff, the state of library and the general infrastructure of the Faculty, the low level of academic mobility etc. It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the infrastructure and the library of MSU and also support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.

The student number of the study programme is growing which indicates sustainability for the future and contributes essentially to the higher education institution budget increase.

As the Faculty in general was at least partially under renovation, it was not possible for the committee to assess the conformity to the requirements of the teaching and learning environment as a whole. ICT devices are available for both Faculty members and students. The computer rooms look modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The staff and the students are relatively motivated to use ICT techniques. The positive trend is the using of *Moodle* platform providing the students with information regarding the courses online. Still, the existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable.

There is almost no foreign literature in the field of law and the books available are rather out-dated. The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German. It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.

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Commendations:

- Good employment rate of the graduates;
- Teaching staff is balanced by age and there is a sign of academic continuity;
- Teaching staff finds time to publish teaching materials for their courses;
- Internship is organised at a satisfactory level and the University helps the students with a place of internship due to specific agreements or good cooperation with many employers;
- The ratio between master students and supervisors is favourable.
- The workload of academic staff is well-balanced according to the ratio between teachers and students;
- Budget planning has sustainable character;
- The usage of Moodle platform providing the students information regarding the courses online;
- Students' suggestions and feedback is considered to be valuable input to the University and faculty;
- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high.

Recommendations:

- **It is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.**
- It is advisable to implement a clear system of gathering and taking into account the feedback from all the important stakeholders.
- It is recommended to consider the possibility to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It would provide more choices to students, but also increase the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility, and therefore again make academic mobility more attractive to the students.
- It is highly recommended to include courses on EU civil procedural law in the study programme, as well as put more emphasis in the curriculum on formulation of procedural acts and also professional ethics.
- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.
- It is recommended to include more comparative perspective in different areas of the study programme.
- Syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks covering the study programme related European or international regulations and comparative perspectives in English, German or French.
- In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of civil procedural law.

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- It would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance in order to support student development.
- In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it should be considered to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.
- If the alumni and the employers do not participate in the evaluation of study process, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.
- It is recommended to involve master students in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research).
- All members of the academic staff involved in the study programme should finalize their PhD studies;
- At the Faculty management level, it is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers.
- It is recommended to increase academic mobility and invite more visiting professors from foreign institutions;
- The academic staff should be encouraged to obtain international experience and supported to participate in the international research projects and other international scientific activities. At the Faculty management level a system should be created that supports and encourages the members of the full-time teaching staff to regularly develop their knowledge and skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks. Regular goals for the international cooperation should be set and the achievement of those goals should be measured regularly e.g. during quarterly performance reviews of the members of the academic staff.
- The Department of Law of Civil Procedure should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme.
- Compared to internationally acceptable standards, the participation in the international research projects and other international scientific activity needs to be much more active. In order to achieve that, more resources should be found and allocated to research activities. **It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme.**
- MSU should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students – e.g consider to delegate the responsibility of study counselling from professors to trained specialists and also provide some sort of psychological counselling services for the students. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.
- The faculty should encourage master students to participate in academic mobility and focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities (for example classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility).
- In order to help the University in its internationalization (and academic mobility) processes at the University and also at the Faculty level, updating and revising the webpage's content in English in order to attract foreign students should be considered.

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- It is recommended to adapt a unified and systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master’s seminars etc). Implementing anti-plagiarism software is a positive improvement but there is room for further improvements.
- It is recommended to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- It is recommended that the data regarding the employment of graduates should be collected be more regularly and systematically.
- It would be in the interests of the Department to formally collect and analyse the causes for dropping out.
- It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the infrastructure and the library of MSU and also support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.
- The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German.
- It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.
- The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable.

Recommendation to the Ministry of Education

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

II Assessment areas and requirements

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	conforms to	partially conforms to	does not conform to
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	requirements	requirements	requirements
mark with 'X'	X		
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Internal regulations; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers. 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>Based on available documents and on the discussions during the assessment visit the assessment committee is convinced that the master programme in Civil Judicial Procedures substantially conforms to requirements.</p> <p>The study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. Considering the majority of the study disciplines within the programme as well as the learning outcomes of the curriculum the title of a study programme is consistent with its content. However, it is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.</p> <p>The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework. The courses and study disciplines taught within the master's programme are distinguishable from those offered on the bachelor's study programme. Study disciplines are presented in a logical succession. Although the study programme in general follows the major trends of the labour market, it is still highly recommended to include courses on EU civil procedural law in the study programme, as well as put more emphasis in the curriculum on formulation of procedural acts and also professional ethics.</p> <p>The academic staff has a strong sense of mission and is well aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.</p> <p>It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language skills (e.g. include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.</p>			

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Commendations:

- Development structure ensures sustainability and continuous development
- The academic staff has a strong sense of mission and is well aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.
- Graduates acquire skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the labour market

Recommendations:

- **It is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.**
- Although the feedback of students, employers and other stakeholders is to some extent taken into account when developing the study programme, it is advisable to implement a clear system of gathering and taking into account the feedback from all the important stakeholders.
- It is recommended to consider the possibility to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It would provide more choices to students, but also increase the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility, and therefore again make academic mobility more attractive to the students.
- **Recommendation to the Ministry of Education:** The system of distributing the amount of ECTS is only partially internationally comparable because according to the Framework Plan for higher education (Order of the Ministry of Education no 455 of 2011 § 62) for the master studies, a course shall have 5/10/15 credits and subsequently one semester shall plan 6-2 courses/modules. This means that all courses on master's level must have the same amount of ECTS (5 ECTS) with the same number of contact hours and hours for individual work. Some courses also are "combined courses" and they offer 10 ECTS. The assessment committee recommends considering changing this rule in order to enable the universities offering Masters level programs some additional flexibility and to support the academic mobility.
- It is highly recommended to include courses on EU civil procedural law in the study programme, as well as put more emphasis in the curriculum on formulation of procedural acts and also professional ethics.
- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

1.1. REQUIREMENT: A higher education institution regularly plans its development: the higher education institution has a development plan accompanied by an action plan to ensure sustainability both in the institution and in a given study programme. The implementation of the action plan is analysed and forms the basis for planning of the next development period.

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Comments:

According to the information obtained during the assessment visit, the new strategic plan of SUM for years 2015 – 2020 shall be established after the election of the new Rector which takes place in October, 2015. In terms of development, the Rector informed the committee that the priority issues for SUM are quality assurance, scientific research and also, modernizing the infrastructure of the University.

Concerning the level of the law programmes, the management found it important to have more impact on local level and create a competitive framework for new talents. Fighting counterfeit and corruption was underlined as a key issue regarding the development of the law programmes.

According to the management (the Rector and Vice-Rector), in the interests of more profound studies, the master programmes in law should be consolidated, as there is currently a surplus of the programmes. The committee was informed that starting from June 1st 2015, there shall only be 5 law departments at SUM.

There is a Strategic Development Plan in place for the Faculty of Law for years 2012 – 2017 that is also accompanied by an action plan.

According to the SER the master programme "Civil Judicial Procedures" was developed by the Department of Law of Civil Procedure who is also responsible for the monitoring and development and the continuous improvement of the programme. The curriculum is organized in accordance with the current legislation.

The programme is focused on necessary skills for graduates in the field of civil procedure law to ensure that they can easily find a professional employment in the current labour market. The aim of the programme is the development of the skills as well as the research-knowledge of the students. According to the SER, the development of the study programme is in line with the national Justice Sector Reform Strategy for the years 2011 – 2016.

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

Comments:

The master program "Civil Judicial Procedures" was authorized by the Order of the Ministry of Education No. 385 of May 30, 2008 (for the curriculum of study program see Annex D.1). Since 2010, students have been enrolled in this program (260 students in 2008 and 349 students in 2014).

The Order no. 455 of the Ministry of Education issued on June 3, 2011, establishes requirements for the study plans at master's level. It is the

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requirement for the professional Master's programmes (90 credits) to be structured in the following way: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Internship (10 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15-25 ECTS), and Specialized disciplines (25-35 ECTS) among which there should be up to 20% alternative disciplines.

The structure of the master's programme "Civil Judicial Procedures" is as follows: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15 ECTS), Specialized disciplines (35 ECTS) including two optional/alternative disciplines (10 ECTS) and Internship (10 ECTS).

The assessment committee finds that relationship between the number of hours and number of credits and the correlation of classes, seminars and individual work meets the formal requirements of the Framework Plan. The master's programme substantially functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. The curriculum also respects the impact of the Bologna Higher Education System and is based on the ECTS transfer system.

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

Comments:

According to the information presented in the SER and the curriculum, the title of the study programme is consistent with its content. In the second cycle of the academic year the emphasis is on the application of knowledge acquired during the first cycle, the deepening is in a scientific field of specialization and improvement of practical skills (see SER).

However, it is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.

1.4. REQUIREMENT: The conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship, support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.

Comments:

According to the information presented in the SER and obtained during the site visit the conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship in general support achievement of the objectives of this study programme.

However, the discussions with the students revealed that as a lot of the students are already employed, it is not easy for them to find time for studying – it takes a lot of their personal time. Taking into account that for 90 ECTS, students also have an independent workload of 25-30 hours per credit point, it is questionable whether the students actually spend enough time on their studies during the semester to meet these requirements.

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

The internship is organized in a professional manner and students gain support from the University as well as from the Department of Law of Civil Procedures. The internship is organized according to the Framework Regulations on practical training in higher education and is based on the curriculum of the internship (Annex B.2.3) and an internship portfolio (Annex B.2.4.). However, the students would appreciate if the internship also included a mobility possibility (e.g Romania).

1.5. REQUIREMENT: The objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme are in coherence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The structure and content of the study programme is internationally comparable.

Comments:

According to the SER the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme take in consideration the regulations of the Ministry of Education and the requirements of the Bologna Process (ECTS credit-transfer-system). The objectives of the curriculum (content and learning outcomes) are in accordance with the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The learning outcomes are comparable with other programmes of HEIs in Moldova.

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

1.6. REQUIREMENT The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master's study programme are clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme.

Comments:

The SER and the discussions during the assessment visit confirm that the objectives, the content and the learning outcomes of the master programme are distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme.

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According to the teachers, the purpose of the MA programme is to allow students to obtain more in-depth knowledge about litigation and practical matters in order to meet the requirements of the profession as such (judges, attorneys-at-law, bailiffs). There are new courses at master's level that are not taught on bachelor's level. Although some courses appear similar, they try to have a separate content in order to avoid overlapping. For example, appeals are more generally covered on the bachelor's level, but on master's level they look at the problems on a deeper level: do research on decisions, compare them.

However, the students still found it necessary to reduce even more the overlap between the courses on bachelor's and master's level.

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

Comments:

The curriculums as well as the additional documents clearly show a logical structure of the master programme. The study programme begins with more general disciplines to the field, such as Non-litigious proceedings in civil procedural law followed by specialized courses like Insolvency proceedings.

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

Comments:

According to the SER, the study programme has been elaborated to provide the students with skills and competences that enable them to provide legal advice on various procedural issues and to participate effectively in examining and resolving civil cases in both courts and at the enforcement stage.

In general, it can be concluded that development of the study programme takes into consideration the major trends of the labour market and the content of the study program is continuously improved to assure that the graduates are educated according to the labour market requirements. The employers appreciated the rather narrow focus of the programme as it allows the students to obtain a more thorough knowledge of a special kind of law.

However, there is still some room for improvement. According to the discussions with the employers and the alumni, taking into account that procedural law is complicated, it is important to draw even more attention to practical aspects during the studies, make the content more actual. Also, it was recommended to put more emphasis on the formulation of procedural acts – proofreading and editing them, as some of the master's programme graduates have been found lacking in their ability to prepare decisions and legal acts. It was found necessary for the programme to focus more on procedural acts and also professional ethics, which is currently not included in the curriculum. There is also no

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course on European Union civil procedural law (ECJ proceedings), although judicial law of some other countries (like Russia) is studied. As Moldova already has laws based on EU directives, but the students do not study them. It is an important matter for future advocates. If the graduates later want to work worldwide, including these subjects is a necessity.

- **Recommendation:** It is highly recommended to include courses on EU civil procedural law in the study programme, as well as put more emphasis in the curriculum on formulation of procedural acts and also professional ethics.

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

Comments:

According to the SER, the study programme renewal procedure is determined by the legal provisions of normative documents in force. The Regulation on initiation, approval, monitoring and periodical evaluation of the study programmes approved by the MSU Senate on 25.02.2014 acts at the institutional level. Any change in the curriculum starts at the initiative of the specialized chairs, taking into account the provisions from the Framework Plan. Also, feedback is received from well-known practitioners. After that, the curriculum is discussed at the office of the Faculty and subsequently at the meeting of the Commission for Quality Assurance including in its structure also a representative of the employers. After this, the curriculum is approved by the Faculty Teaching Council and, by the last instance the Senate of MSU. According to the SER, the students are also involved in the monitoring of the programme, they fill in questionnaires that are evaluated by the chair.

However, the discussions with the teachers, students, alumni and the employers revealed that the feedback is mainly given straight to the professors and in a largely personal and informal manner (word-to-mouth). In the beginning of semester, teachers ask them what issues need to be tackled. Also, after the class the teachers ask for feedback. One teacher is doing his own feedback sessions with students every year. Supposedly, there is an evaluation sheet. The students remembered filling in a questionnaire once. It was stated that the faculty does take students' opinion into account, but slowly. Sometimes, suggestions for the integration of new courses or for the improvement of the skills of graduates have not been fully integrated in the development process of the curriculum.

It can be concluded that although the feedback of students, employers and other stakeholders is to some extent taken into account when developing the study programme, a more systematic approach would be helpful.

- **Recommendation:** Although the feedback of students, employers and other stakeholders is to some extent taken into account when developing the study programme, it is advisable to implement a clear system of gathering and taking into account the feedback from all

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the important stakeholders,	
1.10. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of a study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.	
<p><u>Comments:</u> The interview with the academic employees conducted during the site visit proves the strong awareness of the teaching staff of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives. The teachers themselves are practitioners in the field of civil procedural law and thus possess a strong sense of mission regarding their study disciplines, want to give something back to the society. The teaching staff makes considerable efforts for the assimilation of master students' knowledge, by using various modern methods of teaching (role play, group assessments, modelling of situations, solving test cases etc.). The teaching staff elaborates the course learning outcomes in accordance with the general objectives of the study programme.</p>	
1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.	
<p><u>Comments:</u> In general, the study programme provides the students with opportunities for further education at doctoral level. The students gain some experience in academic writing while preparing their master's theses and therefore obtain necessary skills to continue their research activity within doctoral studies in Law. Still, there is some room for improvement regarding both the foreign language skills of the students (inevitably required for advanced scientific research) and their overall experience in academic writing. Recommendation: It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.</p>	

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

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Collected evidence:

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

General comments:

The Faculty and Department regularly conduct surveys to evaluate learning process and outcomes. However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how students, alumni and employers are actually involved in the development process: The Department should have a clearer procedure to engage the students, alumni and employers in the development process.

The meeting with teaching staff indicated that a variety of teaching methods are used, and they prefer to use active teaching methods. It is commendable that teaching staff publishes practical journal articles and teaching materials for their courses. Teaching staff is well aware of the need to keep up with the changes in legal regulations and recent court practice. Still, in order to provide a wider, comparative perspective, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature in the syllabi.

The University has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship. Students in general expressed satisfaction with organisation of internship. In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of civil procedural law.

It remains unclear how exactly the assessment methods are chosen and matched to learning outcomes and whether the students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

The necessary regulation appears to be in place for the recognition of prior learning, but there is no actual experience. The Department should consider the possibility of increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It provides more choices to students, but also increases the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility and therefore again makes academic mobility more attractive.

The Committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers also participate in the evaluation of study process. If they do not participate, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.

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Although the students are already being encouraged to participate in scientific conferences and publish articles, the Department should find more ways to involve master students in current or future research projects (also in development activities).

As described above, the study programme has both strengths and areas of improvement in this assessment area. Some problems are significant and require substantial effort to improve the situation (e.g. availability and use of foreign legal literature, involving master students in broader research and development activities, increase comparative perspective). As a result, the study programme fulfils the following requirements partially. The Committee understands that some areas of improvement are on Faculty or University level, and thus demand action on Faculty or University level, but still inevitably affect the specific study programmes and their quality.

Commendations:

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

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to include more comparative perspective in different areas of the study programme.
- Syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks covering the study programme related European or international regulations and comparative perspectives in English, German or French.
- In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of civil procedural law.
- It would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance in order to support student development.
- In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it should be considered to increase the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.
- If the alumni and the employers do not participate in the evaluation of study process, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.
- It is recommended to involve master students in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research).

2.1. REQUIREMENT: Study management is regulated, publicly available, and supports the achievement of learning outcomes. In course of study management development, the results of feedback surveys and the analysis of learning activities are taken into account.

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Comments:

The SER is short and general on this issue, and concentrates on quality monitoring/management.

However, the annexes of the SER, and additional information and materials received during the meetings (including those from other programmes) proved that the study management is regulated by national and internal normative documents, which are publicly available (although mostly in Romanian).

The SER and the meetings with the Dean, the Head of the Department, teaching staff and students (including those from other programmes) showed that the Faculty and Department conduct regularly surveys to evaluate learning process and outcomes. In the context of courses, students give their feedback on how course was delivered, what were their expectations, whether they achieved their objectives, etc. The results are taken into account when planning and implementing improvements. Teaching staff told the Committee that the study programme is adjusted also according to practical needs/expectations from the society. The proposals for changes to the study programme are first approved by the Department, then sent to the Faculty and finally to the Senate. The Committee received mixed information on whether and how students, alumni and employers are actually involved in the development process: some said that they are involved, some regretted that they are not. Students told that feedback is collected in more informal way, but it should be a clear and precise procedure. The Department should have a clear procedure to engage the mentioned groups in the development process.

2.2. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, efficient teaching strategies are applied (modern, interactive, teamwork-based, etc.) and oriented towards active learning of the students.

Comments:

The SER includes a long list of teaching methods, which include both traditional (e.g. lectures) and modern (e.g. seminars, problem solving, group work) teaching methods. The meeting with teaching staff indicated that a variety of teaching methods are used, and they prefer to use active teaching methods. Lectures are meant to provide introduction to the course and to explain basic concepts of the subject matter. Seminars are for practical teaching and learning, to develop teamwork, to solve cases, to conduct debates and brainstorming, etc. Seminars demand active participations from students and prior preparation at home. As a good starting point for independent learning, some courses have a textbook written by the instructor (a member of the teaching staff). Teaching staff decides which teaching methods they wish to use and adjust the choice of teaching methods as needed. They expressed concern that seminar groups are big and their size is decided by the Faculty leadership and affected by financial considerations. The meeting with students confirmed that students are generally happy with the choice of teaching methods and that students are active. Students were not entirely satisfied with the technical conditions (e.g access to databases). The Committee was informed that the Faculty will move to renovated premises in autumn and the teaching/learning conditions will improve.

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

Comments:

The SER is very short on this issue. It explains that curriculum is constantly updated and Moodle is used for sharing materials, but does not speak specifically about materials.

However, the meetings with teaching staff and students gave more information regarding teaching materials. The use of up-to-date teaching materials is inevitable for providing high quality education. It is commendable that teaching staff publishes practical journal articles and teaching materials for their courses. Teaching staff is well aware of the need to keep up with the changes in legal regulations and recent court practice.

However, syllabi and meetings with teaching staff showed that a very limited number of foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) is used during the studies. The Committee notes that syllabi contain literature published in Romania or in Russia, but the situation is troubling when it comes to literature in English, French, German, etc. It is understandable that the study programme focuses on Moldovan law, giving Moldovan sources a priority, but in order to provide wider, comparative perspective, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature.

The programme contains some international/European law related courses (e.g. Procedure and Practice of the European Court of Human Rights) or could benefit from comparative perspective, but their lists of literature contain limited number of foreign materials. It is also useful if students worked with foreign legal literature as well as authentic texts of treaties or judgments (Romanian versions are usually translations) to improve their foreign legal language skill. The fact that the instructor has used foreign legal literature to prepare his/he textbook does not mitigate this issue. The Committee saw that legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline, BeckOnline) are not available at the University, but there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles.

The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks covering the study programme related European or international regulations and comparative perspectives in English, French or German.

Students expressed concern that there is constant lack of up-to-date books. They had an impression that this is not due to financial reasons, but to the unwillingness of the Faculty leadership to solve the issue. Although teaching staff told that they lend their personal books to students in order to alleviate the problem, students told that they have not been able to borrow books this way.

- **Recommendation:** Syllabi should include foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) in addition to literature in Romanian and

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Russian and library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks covering the study programme related European or international regulations and comparative perspectives in English, German or French.

2.4. REQUIREMENT: Organisation of internship is clearly regulated, the requirements for the completion of internship are determined, the instructions for conducting the internship are available and the supervision of students in work environment is ensured.

Comments:

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

Students in general expressed satisfaction with organisation of internship. The alumni found the internship reasonable mainly for those students who do not work, but there are quite many students who are working. The majority of students do seek the internship places for themselves and the students who already work can perform their internship at their current workplaces. This opportunity involves a risk. If the current workplace is not related to Civil Disputes, the internship may not achieve its learning outcomes.

- **Recommendation:** In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of civil procedural law.

2.5. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for students and supporting the achievement of learning outcomes of study programmes.

Comments:

According to the SER, the University has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship. Cooperation agreements have been concluded with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova, General Prosecutor etc. Under the Faculty of Law, there is an Associate Bureau of Lawyers “BAA Faculty of Law” which offers a serious internship base for master’s degree students. Also, the employers themselves often contact the Dean offering internship opportunities. Students can themselves find a place of internship. At the meeting with employers, the latter assured that they are satisfied with the students who have performed their internship with them and they are happy to receive the students also in future.

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2.6. REQUIREMENT: Assessment of learning outcomes of students is performed in accordance with the existing requirements. Assessment methodology is consistent with learning outcomes and includes feedback supporting student development.	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The assessment of learning outcomes is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The assessment as a whole is comprised of the initial assessment at the beginning of study process, the current assessments during the semester (60%) and the final assessment at the end of semester (40%). The SER lists different assessment methods which are used. Students are informed at the beginning of the semester how the course will be assessed (methods) and what are the criteria. The Committee understands that the instructor of the course may choose the assessment methods. It remains unclear how exactly the assessment methods are chosen and matched to learning outcomes, especially when considering the fact that all courses are of 5 credits and contact hours are quite similar per 1 credit. The content of assessment methods (e.g. exam questions) are regularly updated. The SER states that the quality of applied assessment method (e.g. specific questions, tests, exams) are assured by the head of the Chair, of the Department and of Quality Management. If they are not subject matter experts, how do they assess and ensure the substantial quality questions, tests, exams, etc. in question? The Committee is not convinced that students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: It would be advisable to provide students with personal feedback regarding their performance in order to support student development. 	
2.7. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER does not address the issue and speaks about something else.</p> <p>The recognition of prior learning and work experience is mainly regulated by national normative documents. The meetings showed that there is confusion what the recognition of prior learning and work experience means. The committee was interested if students can transfer the credits earned, individual courses taken in other Moldovan or foreign higher education institutions at master's or higher level to the MSU as part of their studies at the MSU. The Committee understands that according to national regulation, work experience is recognised only in the framework on vocational higher education. After the meetings, the Committee believes that necessary regulation is in place for the recognition of prior learning, but there is little actual experience. The recognising prior learning is closely connected to academic mobility, i.e. if the credits earned during academic mobility are recognised without undue difficulties, students have one more incentive to take advantage of academic mobility.</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The Department should consider the possibility of increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum. It provides more choices to students, but also increases the amount of credits that could be transferred after the end of academic mobility and therefore again makes academic mobility more attractive.
<p>2.8. REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.</p>
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The evaluation of study process has clearly defined purposes and its results are used to improve curriculum, courses, teaching methods etc. and to select teaching staff. There are several organs or officials who are involved in the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes, e.g. Dean, Quality Assurance Commission, Quality Management Department, and the Pro-rector responsible for didactic activity. The SER and meetings showed that teaching staff and students are asked for feedback and their feedback is considered by appropriate organs and officials. Teaching staff claimed that they are not shown the results of students' feedback (what students think about them and their courses). Students told that their feedback has a very slow effect. However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers also participate in the evaluation of study process (what process there is it seems to be personal and informal).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: If the alumni and the employers do not participate in the evaluation of study process, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.
<p>2.9. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in research and development activities, the supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, applied projects, final thesis) is well organised and the satisfaction rate with the quality of supervision is high.</p>
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Each student has a supervisor appointed by the Department. The study programme involves 9 instructors and has 32 master students (enrolled in 2013). When considering the number of teaching staff and students, the ratio is good and students should receive adequate supervision. Students have the freedom to choose the topics for their master's theses. Master students are encouraged to participate in scientific conferences and to publish scientific articles. The meetings with students and alumni showed that students actually participate in conferences.</p> <p>However, the Committee found no evidence that students are involved in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research), e.g. participating in a research project led by a member of teaching staff. True, there are examples where professors and students/alumni have co-authored a publication. The SER shows and teaching staff told the Committee that they participate in research</p>

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projects.

- **Recommendation:** The Department should find ways to involve master students in current or future research projects (also in development activities).

3. TEACHING STAFF	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Internal regulations; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers. 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>At the moment, the qualification of full-time teaching staff does not fully comply with legal requirements as not all of them hold a PhD degree and only a few have had some international experience. However, the fact that some members of the teaching staff are also involved in practical legal activities related to the disciplines taught can be considered positive. Provided that there is no major overlapping of the same individuals in many of the master programmes under evaluation and the teaching staff involved in this master's programme do not have a significant involvement also in the bachelor's programmes, this should assure some consistency to the teaching process. Still, in order to meet the requirements established by legislation, all members of the academic staff involved in the study programme should as soon as possible finalize their PhD studies.</p> <p>The members of the teaching staff have adequate teaching competence - the fact that most of them are involved also in practicing legal activities in field similar to disciplines taught is a positive as they can combine the practical experience with their teaching activities.</p> <p>Apart from implementing a MOODLE platform that provides some on-line training possibilities for academics and students, it appears that there are no other staff development measures implemented. At the Faculty management level, it is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff</p>			

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development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers.

Members of the academic staff involved in this programme have not participated in teaching activities in other foreign institutions. The management should continuously support and encourage the members of the full-time teaching staff to regularly develop their knowledge and skills and participate in international mobility and networks. Measures should be taken to encourage and support the teaching staff to participate in the international research projects and other international scientific activities. Regular goals for the international cooperation should be set and the achievement of those goals should be measured regularly e.g. during quarterly performance reviews of the members of the academic staff. The Department of Law of Civil Procedure should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme.

Compared to internationally acceptable standards, the participation in the international research projects and other international scientific activity needs to be much more active. In order to achieve that, more resources should be found and allocated to research activities. **It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme.**

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

Considering all those facts, as well as the general findings from the SER and provided annexes, the general conclusion of the committee is that this criterion is partially compliant with the requirements.

Commendations:

- Specialists teaching disciplines with major practical aspects;
- There is a strong strategy for development.

Recommendations:

- All members of the academic staff involved in the study programme should finalize their PhD studies;
- At the Faculty management level, it is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers.
- The academic staff should be encouraged to obtain international experience and supported to participate in the international research projects and other international scientific activities. At the Faculty management level a system should be created that supports and encourages the members of the full-time teaching staff to regularly develop their knowledge and skills at foreign higher education

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<p>institutions and participate in international networks. Regular goals for the international cooperation should be set and the achievement of those goals should be measured regularly e.g. during quarterly performance reviews of the members of the academic staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Law of Civil Procedure should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme. • Compared to internationally acceptable standards, the participation in the international research projects and other international scientific activity needs to be much more active. In order to achieve that, more resources should be found and allocated to research activities. It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme. 	
<p>3.1. REQUIREMENT: The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. At least 60% of the study programme is covered by full-time staff. 100% of full-time staff involved in the study programme have PhD degree or equal.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER states that the study programme is covered with 9 academic staff members, out of which only 3 are not in a full-time position, resulting thus a 66,6% coverage with full-time staff. From annex D.5 (general data on staff), it results that only 3 people out of 6 full-staff have a PhD degree (50% instead of 100%). In order to overcome this shortage, all members of the academic staff involved in the study programme should as soon as possible finalize their PhD studies.</p>	
<p>3.2. REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The age average of full-time staff is around 30 years which is relatively young. The oldest staff member is 42 years old and the youngest is 29. Provided that the PhD students finalize their doctoral studies, the programme's sustainability can be ensured.</p>	
<p>3.3. REQUIREMENT: The total number and qualification of teaching staff is – based on their responsibilities, workload and the number of supervised students – sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The qualification of the teaching staff is adequate to disciplines taught. However, the fact that not all of them hold a PhD degree could be considered a drawback. In terms of workload and supervised students, it appears from annex B 3.2 that the supervision workload is around 3</p>	

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<p>students per member of teaching staff which means that their workload is adequate for achieving the learning outcomes on this particular programme.. However, this figure should be considered only as an estimate, as some of the academics involved in this study programme are also involved in the bachelor’s programme and in other master programmes, thus this number is likely to be bigger in their cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: It is advisable that all members of the teaching staff not holding PhD as soon as possible finalize their PhD studies. 	
<p>3.4. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>From Annex 3.3 it appears that members of the teaching staff have adequate teaching competence. The fact that most of them are involved also in practicing legal activities in field similar to disciplines taught is a plus, as they can combine the practical experience with their teaching activities. At the same time, from annex B 3.4 it results that members of teaching staff have attended various scientific events, thus allowing them to improve their research and teaching methods.</p>	
<p>3.5. REQUIREMENT: The staff development system is effective: the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement, staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Apart from implementing a MOODLE platform that provides some on-line training possibilities for academics and students, it appears that there are no other staff development measures implemented. The Development Plan for the 2012-2017 period (Annex D7) states that until 2012 self-improvement was the only existing way for improvement of the teaching staff. In the respective plan it is stated that the University should embark into developing cooperation links with foreign institutions, mainly from Romania, allowing professors to be invited to teach on a reciprocity basis. The assessment committee can only agree with the latter.</p> <p>According to the teachers, they keep themselves updated with latest developments, participating in several working groups, for example regarding the amendment of laws and the explanatory decisions of the Supreme Court, etc.</p> <p>Concerning other staff development activities besides some continuing education possibilities, the committee did not receive any evidence concerning the broader staff development plan, including conducting systematic appraisal interviews with the staff and other methods of staff development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: At the Faculty management level, it is recommended to establish a comprehensive staff development system that includes also other important elements of staff development, like the implementation of regular appraisal interviews with the teachers. 	

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<p>3.6. REQUIREMENT: Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The committee found no evidence regarding the involvement of any foreign visiting professors in this programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The Department should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching of the study programme. 	
<p>3.7. REQUIREMENT: The members of the full-time teaching staff of a higher education institution regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Members of the academic staff involved in this programme have not participated in teaching activities in other foreign institutions. From the CVs presented it appears that almost none of the academic-staff members has had real international experiences, except 2 staff members. None of them appear to be member of international networks. Therefore the programme in this aspect only partially meets the requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The committee recommends to create a system at the Faculty management level that supports and encourages the members of the full-time teaching staff to participate in the academic mobility programmes, regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks. Regular goals for the international cooperation should be set and the achievement of those goals should be measured regularly e.g. during quarterly performance reviews of the members of the academic staff. 	
<p>3.8. REQUIREMENT: Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Despite the fact that teaching staff was not involved in national and international research projects, over the last five years there were some attendance or participations in international conferences organized both in Chisinau and abroad, which led, in some cases, to the publication of scientific papers (Annex 3.4).</p>	

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- **Recommendation:** Compared to internationally acceptable standards, the participation in the international research projects and other international scientific activity needs to be much more active. In order to achieve that, more resources should be found and allocated to research activities. **It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme.**

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

Comments:

The SER stipulates that the research activity of each member of the academic staff is planned and monitored, as each of the academics has to fill in every year an individual work plan, with research tangible result, which becomes part of the Department's yearly plan, the real achievement of such results being monitored by the head of the Department, based on reports and evidences provided by each member of the teaching staff.

At the same time, the Development strategy presented in Annex D7 stipulates for the period 2012-2017 the creation of two research centers: Centre for Public Law and Private Law Center, that will organize scientific activities (sessions and conferences, debates, round tables, practical workshops, case studies, experimental processes, methodological seminars, international schools, summer schools and essay contests), with emphasis in organizing international scientific conferences every two years.

At the visit, proofs of individual plan for teachers, as well as reports by head of Department were presented to the evaluation team.

4. STUDENTS	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
Collected evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Internal regulations; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers. 			

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General comments:

Although the committee was pleased to meet many satisfied students who all assured the positive image of the Civil Judicial Procedures study programme, there is also plenty of room for improvements. Main reasons for regarding the decision to assess the area as partially conforming to requirements were insufficient academic mobility (internal and external) and also the lack of systematic approach towards anti-plagiarism and academic fraud issues.

The students' satisfaction with the study programme is high and they have good informal relationship with the teaching staff.

At the moment, mobility options on the Civil Judicial, study programme are very limited and the academic mobility is virtually non-existent. It is recommended to encourage master students to participate in academic mobility and focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities (for example, hold classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility). In order to help the University in its internationalization (and academic mobility) processes at the University and also at the Faculty level, it is advisable to consider updating and revising the webpage's content in English in order to attract foreign students.

To further support the students, MSU should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students – e.g consider to delegate the responsibility of study counselling from professors to trained specialists and also provide some sort of psychological counselling services for the students. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.

The committee welcomes the use of modern software by MSU in order to discover plagiarism, yet this approach is only one aspect of plagiarism detection. Therefore, the committee urges the Faculty to adapt a unified and more systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and actively seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master's seminars etc).

Neither SER nor the additional documents provided more detailed data on the employment rate of the graduates. It is recommended that the data regarding the employment of graduates should be collected be more regularly and systematically.

Although the graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements, it would be in the Faculty's best interests that the causes for dropping out would also be formally collected and analysed.

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Commendations:

- Students' suggestions and feedback is considered a valuable input to the University and Faculty.
- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high.
- Graduates of the study programme are competitive in the labour market

Recommendations:

- MSU should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students – e.g consider to delegate the responsibility of study counselling from professors to trained specialists and also provide some sort of psychological counselling services for the students. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.
- The faculty should encourage master students to participate in academic mobility and focus on informing them about the mobility opportunities (for example classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility).
- In order to help the University in its internationalization (and academic mobility) processes at the University and also at the Faculty level, updating and revising the webpage's content in English in order to attract foreign students should be considered.
- It is recommended to adapt a unified and systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master's seminars etc). Implementing anti-plagiarism software is a positive improvement but there is room for further improvements.
- It is recommended to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- It is recommended to formally collect and analyse the causes for dropping out.
- It is recommended that the data regarding the employment of graduates should be collected be more regularly and systematically.

4.1. REQUIREMENT: The admission requirements for student applicants are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme. The admission of students is performed by procedures stipulated in the normative acts.

Comments:

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

According to the SER, admission to the "Civil Judicial Procedures" master program is governed by the rules of organization and development of admission to higher education master cycle II, adopted and approved annually (<http://usm.md/admitere/>) under the Rules for Admission to

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higher education master cycle II, approved by Government Decision nr.1455 of 24.12.2007. The Dean informed the committee that annually, the the criteria for enrolment of students is approved annually by the Senate.

Admission to master's degree studies is in accordance with the rules of the institution and is organized in two sessions. The admission examination for master's degree studies consists in a written or oral test for the profile subjects, also test for one foreign language and test for IT skills. According to the Dean, starting with year 2015, there shall be an online test as an entrance exam to the master's level studies.

The national admission criteria include a specialty exam and evaluation of the IT and foreign language skills (English/French). **Regarding the general lack of foreign language skills among the master students encountered by the committee, a question can be raised whether the language test serves its purpose adequately or is there some room for improvement.**

4.2. REQUIREMENT: The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.

Comments:

Although the SER claimed that study and career counselling is available to students, the committee was not able to witness the awareness of the students or the alumni of other formal counselling services than career counselling. According to the students, there is a career counselling centre but they have not seen their offers. The centre was not considered to be very popular and the students thought it should promote their services somehow.

It is recommended for the Faculty to consider delegating the responsibility of study counselling from professors to a trained specialist. All of the professors are not prepared to provide effective study counselling. A separate study advisor can provide more professional counselling and could also ease the professors' workload. The committee received no information about any psychological counselling services available to the students in MSU.

There seems to be a lack of information regarding other counselling services besides career counselling.

- **Recommendation:** MSU should establish a formalized and effective counselling system for the students – e.g consider to delegate the responsibility of study counselling from professors to trained specialists and also provide some sort of psychological counselling services for the students. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.

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<p>4.3. REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Mobility options are very limited. Although there very few options exist, the students are still not aware about the opportunities they might have. The committee encourages the Faculty to seek more academic mobility opportunities and to raise the awareness amongst students.</p> <p>In the Moldova State University operates the Department of International Relations, which is responsible for implementing the internal and external mobility mechanism. The Ministry of Education provides external mobility through cooperation and assistance programs with other universities. Furthermore, The Faculty has signed cooperation agreements with the Faculty of Law of the "Babes-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania) and the Faculty of Law of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași (Romania), and the Faculty of Law of the Vilnius University (Lithuania).</p> <p>Despite of the above, the level of awareness of the students about the mobility possibilities and the actual availability of the financial, organisational and academic support is very low. According to the students, some of them have wanted to have opportunities of mobility, but it has been really difficult to find them, as there are not many options. They have not heard of anyone participating in mobility programmes. One of the students applied for Erasmus + to Romania and it was very difficult to access the information. There is an information centre in MSU but according to the students, there is no-one there.</p> <p>The committee understands that this is mainly not a question of the financial or organisational abilities but rather the lack of considering the participation of students in international programs - an activity worthy of supporting and encouraging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: It is recommended to provide master students with internal and external mobility possibilities and focus on informing them about such opportunities (for example, hold classes or seminars to introduce the opportunities for academic mobility). 	
<p>4.4. REQUIREMENT: Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Although master students can apply to international mobility programs, the academic mobility is virtually non-existent (see also above).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The committee recommends the faculty members to actively seek possibilities to support and encourage students to participate in international mobility programmes. 	

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<p>4.5. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>As stated in the SER and also confirmed during the interviews, students are involved in the decision-making processes at various levels of the University. Master’s degree student representatives are included in the Council of the Faculty of Law, in the University Senate but also in the Quality Committee of the Faculty.</p>	
<p>4.6. REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the SER and information provided to the committee during the assessment visit, an ethics committee operates in MSU with a purpose to discover and penalize any academic fraud. In order to prevent and exclude plagiarism in master thesis, MSU is testing a special program that determines whether the master thesis overlap with other existing works and to what extent it overlaps. In this order the master thesis is presented with a CD copy which, after inspection, shall be kept in the archives of MSU. The purpose of this program is to prevent academic fraud, and copyright protection. The committee welcomes the use of modern software by MSU in order to discover plagiarism, yet this approach is only one aspect of plagiarism detection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: All of the study programmes under evaluation lack a systematic approach towards academic fraud. In many cases the discovery of academic fraud lies upon academic staff (for example thesis supervisors). Therefore, the committee urges the Faculty to adapt a unified and more systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and actively seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master’s seminars etc). 	
<p>4.7. REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates’ employment and is monitoring the evolution of graduates’ career.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Although in MSU there is the Centre for Career Guidance and Employment that is responsible for tracking professional development, the assessment committee was not able to confirm that there actually was a system in place for keeping touch with the graduates. Much of the communication with graduates and the monitoring of graduates career is taking place informally and is based on individual connections and</p>	

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<p>relationships between the alumni and the (teaching) staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The committee recommends to consider organising annual events e.g. conferences, seminars or other types of networking meetings with the alumni of the Faculty. Also the collecting feedback from graduates could be more regular and systematic. 	
<p>4.8. REQUIREMENT: The competitiveness of the graduates of a study programme is demonstrated by employment rate according to obtained qualification; unemployment rate; employment rate in other fields than the one studied within the programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The committee was able to confirm that the students in the Civil Juridical Procedures study programme are prepared with the necessary skills and qualifications and also needed in the labour market. The chair is responsible for the implementation of the master's degree program, monitors by its own means the employment of graduates and their career development. Usually, this is materialized in writing recommendations to soliciting employers, as well as in maintaining collaboration links depending on requirements. Neither SER nor the additional documents provided more detailed data on the employment rate of the graduates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: It is recommended that the data regarding the employment of graduates should be collected be more regularly and systematically. 	
<p>4.9. REQUIREMENT: There is a system in place for monitoring academic progress. Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements. Effective measures are implemented to reduce the drop-out rates.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Master students' performances are fixed in report cards, also each lecturer shall complete group journal where they will also register exam results.</p> <p>The documents presented to the committee demonstrated an unusually high average grade of the students. Here, a question might be raised whether the grading system is adequate in its current form for effectively measuring the performance of the students or should it be somewhat modified and improved in order to really support the development of the students.</p> <p>Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements, the drop-out rate has been increasing during the years (3,84% in year 2012 and 9.37% in 2013) but is still relatively low. However, it would still be in the interests of the Department to formally collect and analyse the</p>	

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causes for dropping out.

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
<p>Collected evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Internal regulations; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers. 			
<p>General comments:</p> <p>The budget planning in general is sustainable. However, the Faculty seems underfinanced, which according to the understanding of the committee is the reason for many shortcomings described above, e.g. the general salary level of the academic staff, the state of library and the general infrastructure of the Faculty, the low level of academic mobility etc. It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the infrastructure and the library of MSU and also support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.</p> <p>The student number of the study programme is growing which indicates sustainability for the future and contributes essentially to the higher education institution budget increase.</p> <p>As the Faculty in general was at least partially under renovation, it was not possible for the committee to assess the conformity to the requirements of the teaching and learning environment as a whole. ICT devices are available for both Faculty members and students. The computer rooms look modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The staff and the students are relatively motivated to use ICT techniques. The positive trend is the using of <i>Moodle</i> platform providing the students with information regarding the courses online. Still, the</p>			

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

There is almost no foreign literature in the field of law and the books available are rather out-dated. The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German. It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.

Commendations:

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

Recommendations:

- It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the infrastructure and the library of MSU and also support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.
- The University should pay attention to the modern sources of information when replenishing the library, investing in international academic databases, training the librarians, teaching staff and students of being able and motivated to use the resources. The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German.
- It is recommended to increase the awareness of students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.
- The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable.

5.1. REQUIREMENT: The financial resources of a higher education institution are adequate for conducting studies, development activities related to studies and supporting the development of the teaching staff.

Comments:

According to SER SUM provides the "Civil Judicial Procedures" program with the financial resources necessary to carry out studies. Less

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resources are allocated for the development of courses, comments, research of practice of law and in general for the development of master studies.

From year 2010 to 2014, the revenues have increased by approximately 10% and so have the expenditures - by approximately 16%. The committee is convinced that these numbers clearly show the sustainable character of budget planning.

However, in general the faculty seems underfinanced, which according to the understanding of the committee is the reason for many shortcomings described above, e.g. the general salary level of the academic staff, the state of library and the general infrastructure of the faculty, the low level of academic mobility etc.

- **Recommendation:** It would be advisable for the University to try to find some additional resources in order to mitigate the possible risks to the financial sustainability and also upgrade the infrastructure and the library of MSU and also support the mobility of both teaching staff and the students.

5.2. REQUIREMENT: Trends in the number of students and graduates, and the budget of a higher education institution in the last three to five years indicate sustainability.

Comments:

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

No.	Registration year	Graduation year	Number of students registered	Number of students graduated
1.	2010	2012	14	14
2.	2011	2013	15	15
3.	2012	2014	26	25
4.	2013	2015	32	29
5.	2014	2016	31	

As indicated in the chart, the number of master's degree students on the master's degree program "Civil Judicial Procedures" is growing which indicates the sustainability of the study programme and contributes essentially to the higher education institution budget increase.

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<p>5.3. REQUIREMENT: Teaching and learning environments have been developed according to the teaching and learning objectives, include all facilities necessary for conducting studies in a given study programme and are of adequate capacity considering the number of students (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories, rooms for students independent work and recreation, video projectors, internet etc.).</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u> According to SER, the SUM has allocated for the masters programme classrooms equipped with enough space for conducting classes and seminars. In particular, in 2014-2015 school year the master program "Civil Judicial Procedures" is conducted classes and seminars in auditorium 5 block I, MSU provided with 34 seats and a space of 66.7 sq. m and auditorium 11 block I, MSU provided with 60 seats and a space of 84.2 sq. m .</p> <p>The committee witnessed that the faculty in general was at least partially under renovation, therefore it is currently not possible to assess whether the outcome of the works will meet all the requirements.</p>	
<p>5.4. REQUIREMENT: Both the conduct of studies and other activities of a higher education institution are supported by up-to-date information technology solutions, including the study information system, e-learning opportunities, and communication portals for students and teaching staff.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>In general the number of computers is sufficient. ICT devices are available for faculty members and students. The computer rooms look in general modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The staff and the students are relatively motivated to use ICT techniques.</p> <p>However, the availability and the knowledge of Faculty members regarding electronic legal databases should be increased. The committee found no evidence during the assessment visit that the basic legal databases are available for use from Faculty computers. The positive trend is the using of <i>Moodle</i> platform providing the students with information regarding the courses online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation: The existing ICT solutions should be further developed in order to guarantee the existing resources to be fully utilised and to take the usage of modern technologies to the next level, e.g., full e-courses, webinars, video lectures and comparable. 	
<p>5.5. REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p>	

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SUM has dormitories for students (Annex B. 5.5.). Master law students stay in the dormitory no.19 on Flower Street 4/2, Chisinau. Law Faculty students receive medical services at University Medical Center located on Pan Halippa str. 6/5 Chişinău.

5.6. REQUIREMENT: A library supports the conduct of studies ensuring that up-to-date information sources are available, and provides students with the opportunities for independent work.

Comments:

According the SER, the library is equipped with 1,809,725 of books, 1445 PhD thesis; 4074 rare books, 523 places for reading rooms (capacity that can simultaneously serve more than 20% of the students of the Faculty of Law of USM) and 4359 m² of functional space.

However, in the light of this data, the most significant problem related to library is that there is almost no foreign literature in the field of law. The books available are rather out-dated. The visit to the library proved that the literature in the field is inadequate and needs fundamental strategic re-planning. The students and academic staff are not aware of international databases and therefore not motivated to use the few available. Also, the librarians need training to give advice to the students on how to access electronic academic materials.

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