



Accreditation of Study Programmes  
Assessment Report

**Institution:** The State University of Moldova

**Study programme:** Professional Master in Criminal Law

**Assessment committee:**

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**Coordinator:** Hillar Bauman

**Dates of the assessment visit:** 19/05/15

**Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA:** 10.07.2015

**Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation:** 20.07.2015

**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 (1<sup>st</sup> cycle) and the Doctoral level (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle), and on 125 Master of Research and Professional Master study programmes (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle) with the corresponding duration of 2 and 1.5 years.

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

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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 “Criminal Law”, which is being evaluated, is a programme with the duration of 1.5 years of studies, three semesters and 90 credits. The programme is managed by the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology 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. The study programme in general follows the major trends of the labour market. It should be ensured by the Faculty and the Department that no overlaps occur between the content of bachelor’s and master’s study programmes in the field of criminal law.

The academic staff 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.

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 the 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.

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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. However, some students complained that sometimes tutors do not have time to guide them. If this happens, the Department should react quickly to make sure that the internship fulfils its objectives. In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of criminal 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.

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).

All the full-time teaching staff holds PhD degrees. Still, the number of full-time staff should be increased in order to attain the minimum legal threshold and adequately achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.

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.

Concerning other staff development activities besides some continuing education possibilities, the committee did not receive any evidence concerning the broader staff development plan. 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 Criminal Law and Criminology should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme.

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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 Criminal Law 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. 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).

It is recommended that the collecting of data regarding the employment of graduates would be more regular and systematic. Also, the number of unemployed graduates is very high (e.g. 36% in 2015), therefore the curriculum should correspond more to the real needs of the labour market in Moldova.

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 is 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

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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 number of master's degree students on the master's degree program "Criminal Law" is stable or growing which indicates the sustainability of the study programme.

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. There was dissatisfaction among the students with the learning environment.

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.

### **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 well organized 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's 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;

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- The usage of Moodle platform providing the students information regarding the courses online;
- Students' suggestions and feedback is considered valuable input to the University and faculty;
- Students' satisfaction with the study programme is high.

### Recommendations:

- **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 should be ensured by the Faculty and the Department that no overlaps occur between the content of bachelor's and master's study programmes in the field of criminal law.
- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language (and other foreign languages) skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.
- 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 criminal 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).
- The number of full-time staff should be increased in order to attain the minimum legal threshold and adequately achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.
- 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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- 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 Criminal Law and Criminology 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. 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 that the collecting of data regarding the employment of graduates would be more regular and systematic. Also, the number of unemployed graduates is very high (e.g. 36% in 2015), therefore the curriculum should correspond more to the real needs of the labour market in Moldova.
- 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.



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

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### General comments:

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

The study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. Considering the majority of the 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. The study programme in general follows the major trends of the labour market. It should be ensured by the Faculty and the Department that no overlaps occur between the content of bachelor's and master's study programmes in the field of criminal law.

The academic staff 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 (and other foreign languages) skills (e.g, include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

### 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

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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 should be ensured by the Faculty and the Department that no overlaps occur between the content of bachelor's and master's study programmes in the field of criminal law.
- It is advisable to pay more attention to developing the students' English language (and other foreign languages) skills (e.g. include in the curriculum more foreign language materials) and also offer the students some special course(s) on the methodology of legal research.

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

### Comments:

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 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, there shall only be 5 law departments at SUM.

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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’s programme "Criminal Law" was developed by the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology. The Department drafted its Strategic Development Plan for years 2011 – 2016 in order to ensure the implementation of the study programme. The development plan is based on the Moldova higher education strategic directions of development and is in line with the priorities of the SUM and the Law Faculty. The plan underlines the main task of the Department: offering efficient professional training in the field of law to facilitate the social and professional integration of criminal law professionals in both the Republic of Moldova and also other countries.

The annual work plan of the Department and the individual work plans of the professors are developed according to the Strategic Development Plan.

The study programme is focused on necessary skills for graduates in the field of criminal law to ensure that they can easily find a professional employment in the current labour market. The Department is responsible for the monitoring and development and the continuous improvement of the study programme.

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

#### Comments:

The Master’s program “Criminal Law” has been authorized by the Order of the Ministry of Education No. 385 of May 30, 2008.

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

The structure of the master’s programme “Criminal Law” is as follows: Master thesis (30 ECTS), Fundamental disciplines (15 ECTS), Specialized disciplines (35 ECTS) including three optional/alternative disciplines (20 ECTS), Internship (10 ECTS) and Optional disciplines (10).

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 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. However, it is advisable to increase the number optional disciplines in the curriculum.

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<b>1.3. REQUIREMENT: The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.</b>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the information presented in the SER and the curriculum, the title of the study programme is consistent with its content. 80% of the study disciplines included in the programme refer to the main institutions of criminal law, whereas the other 20% of disciplines are interdisciplinary and aimed at offering additional detailed knowledge.</p> <p>According to SER and the teachers, the main objective of the study programme is to implement in practice all the theoretical knowledge obtained during the first cycle and to develop the professional skills of the students. In order to achieve this, the programme is focused on the mechanism of human rights' protection within the criminal justice system, the classification of specific criminal offences and also international mutual assistance in penal matter and functioning of international courts. The teachers confirmed that there are different orientations included in the curriculum: economic crimes, war crimes, public administration, etc.</p> <p><b>Nevertheless, it is highly recommended to increase the cooperation between the master of law programmes in MSU regarding both the content and conduct of studies.</b></p>	
<b>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.</b>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>However, the discussions with the students revealed that as a lot of the students are already employed and the master courses begin immediately after the working hours, the students are quite tired during the contact hours. Taking into account that for 90 ECTS, students also have an independent workload of 25-30 hours per credit point, it is questionable whether the students actually spend enough time on their studies during the semester to meet these requirements.</p> <p>The available study plan and the detailed curriculum supports the objectives of the study programme through individual work and practical training. Contact hours with academic teaching staff and individual work are integrated and compulsory and mandatory subjects are offered.</p> <p>The internship is organized in a professional manner and students gain support from the University as well as from the Department of Criminal</p>	

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<p>Law and Criminology. The internship is organized according to the Framework Regulations on practical training in higher education and is based on the curriculum of the internship and an internship portfolio.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>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 and internationally comparable with the curriculum of the Romanian Criminal Science Master Programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Recommendation to the Ministry of Education:</b> 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.</p> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER and the discussions during the assessment visit that the objectives, the content and the learning outcomes are in general distinguishable from those of the Bachelor's study programme. However, although the curriculum of the master's programme is focused on advanced education of graduates from the bachelor's programme, there is a lack of clearly distinguishable subjects. Students informed the assessment committee that the courses sometimes repeat the content they have already learned in bachelor program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> It should be ensured by the Faculty and the Department that no overlaps occur between the content of bachelor's and master's study programmes in the field of criminal law.</p> </li> </ul>	

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<p><b>1.7. REQUIREMENT: Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The curriculums as well as the additional documents clearly show a logical structure of the master’s programme in Criminal Law.</p>	
<p><b>1.8. REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER and discussions with the employers and the alumni confirmed that the development of the study programme takes into consideration the major trends of the labour market. The content of the study program is continuously improved to assure that the graduates are educated according to current labour market requirements. According to the SER, the study programme has been developed in accordance with the professional needs of the criminal investigation officers, prosecutors, lawyers, and judges. The programme has also been approved by the General Prosecutor’s Office and The Judges’ Association of the Republic of Moldova.</p> <p>In general, the employers were satisfied with the level of skills and qualifications of the graduates of the master’s programme. However, one employer found that there is also a need for some wider theoretical preparation of the students, as the focus of the programme is at the moment rather narrow and practice-oriented.</p> <p>The alumni on the other hand found that the balance of theory and practice in the programme has enabled them to succeed in the labour market and found the narrow specialization useful.</p>	
<p><b>1.9. REQUIREMENT: Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>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.</p>	

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According to the teaching staff, the development of the study programme takes place on a continuous basis – the disciplines in the curriculum are reviewed regularly, taking into account the latest development in the society. Also, the students and alumni are also involved in the development of the study programme. The students confirmed that they are sometimes (informally) asked about their expectations regarding the programme and for their opinions or suggestions regarding the content of the curriculum.

However, it was revealed that 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 the important stakeholders.

<b>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.</b>	
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Comments:

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

<b>1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.</b>	
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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 the doctoral studies in Law.

However, the interviews with the students demonstrated that 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. In order to offer the students a more internationally comparative perspective, the selection of foreign language materials should be further replenished (also



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outsourced) and the students better guided to use it.

**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.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-evaluation report (SER);</li> <li>• Annexes of SER;</li> <li>• Internal regulations;</li> <li>• Additional documents received during the site visit;</li> <li>• Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General comments:</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. However, some students complained that sometimes tutors do not have time to guide them. If this happens, the Department should react quickly to make sure that the internship fulfils its objectives. In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of criminal law.</p> <p>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.</p>			

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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.

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, increasing 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.

### Recommendations:

- 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 criminal 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.**

### Comments:

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The main text of the SER does not describe how study management is regulated and whether the regulation supports the achievement of learning outcomes. 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 the 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. 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, etc. Seminars demand active participations from students and prior preparation at home. As a good starting point for independent learning, most courses have a textbook written by the instructor (member of the teaching staff). Teaching staff decides which teaching methods they wish to use and adjust the choice of teaching methods as needed.

One member of teaching staff told the Committee that he asked the students which are their preferred teaching methods and used them as far as possible. The meeting with students confirmed that students are generally happy with the choice of teaching methods and that students are active in seminars (although sometimes tired as the lessons take place in the evening after work). Students complained that most auditoriums do not have a stationary projector and valuable time is lost at the beginning of lectures/seminars for setting up the projector. 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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<p><b>2.3. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, up-to-date teaching materials are used.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER speaks mostly about teaching methods. Regarding teaching materials, it lists the general categories of materials used in teaching process. 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. It was impressive that 10 courses out of 12 had specially prepared textbooks. Teaching staff is well aware of the need to keep up with the changes in legal regulations and recent court practice (including of the European Court of Human Rights), and revise and update regularly their teaching materials.</p> <p>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 a wider, comparative perspective, facilitate international networking of both the teaching staff and the students, and taking into account the possible developments in Moldova (e.g the association agreement to join the European Union), it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature. For example, European Criminal Law inevitably demands foreign legal literature. The programme contains several international law related courses (e.g. international criminal law, human rights law), but their lists of literature contain only a couple of foreign materials and these were published over a decade ago (e.g. in international criminal law, developments are very rapid and materials from 2000 are basically outdated). 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks on international law, human rights and international criminal law in English, French or German.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The internship is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The curriculum contains a compulsory five week internship (10</p>	

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<p>credits). The objectives of internship are defined in the regulation of internship and also available in the blank portfolio of internship which is given to each student performing 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. Some students complained that sometimes tutors do not have time to guide them. If this happens, the Department should react quickly to make sure that the internship fulfils its objectives. At the end of internship, students complete a portfolio of internship.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The University has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship. 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. Students expressed satisfaction that the University guarantees them a place of internship. The Committee learned that the students who already work can perform their internship at their current workplaces. This opportunity involves a risk. If the current workplace is not related to Criminal Law, the internship may not achieve its learning outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> In order to achieve the necessary learning outcomes, all the internships should be conducted in the field of criminal law.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<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 the 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. Although the SER does formally list the teaching methods used, the evidence presented during the meetings with the students and teaching staff did not sufficiently explain to the Committee the reasoning behind the selection of applicable methods in the context of the achievement of learning outcomes. The content of assessment methods (e.g. exam questions) is regularly updated. The SER states that the quality of applied assessment method (e.g. specific</p>	

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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 did not receive enough evidence and is thus not convinced that students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

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

### **2.7. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.**

#### Comments:

The SER does not address this issue. It speaks how the Faculty welcomes if students are involved in extra curriculum activities, take diverse courses, participated in discussions etc.

The recognition of prior learning and work experience is mainly regulated by national normative documents. The meetings showed that there is confusion as to what the recognition of prior learning and work experience actually 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.

- **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.

### **2.8. REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.**

#### Comments:

The evaluation of study process has clearly defined purposes and its results are used to improve curriculum, courses, teaching methods etc. and to select teaching staff. There are several organs or officials who are involved in the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes, e.g. Dean, Quality Assurance Commission, Quality Management Department, and the Pro-rector responsible for didactic activity.

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The SER and meetings showed that teaching staff and students are asked for feedback and their feedback is considered by appropriate organs and officials.

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

**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.**

Comments:

Each student has a supervisor appointed by the Department. The study programme involves 11 instructors and has 72 master’s students (enrolled in 2014). When considering the number of teaching staff and students, the ratio raises some concerns that students may not receive adequate supervision. Students have the freedom to choose the topics for their master’s theses. The meetings with students and alumni showed that they were satisfied with supervision. Master’s students are encouraged to participate in scientific conferences and to publish scientific articles. The meetings with students and alumni showed that students actually participate in conferences and publish articles (sometimes with their supervisors).

However, the Committee found no evidence that students are involved in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research), e.g. participating in a research project led by a member of teaching staff. True, there are examples where professors and students/alumni have co-authored a publication. The SER hints in several places that there are research projects. The meeting with teaching staff did not bring clarity on this issue.

- **Recommendation:** The Department should find and participate in research projects as well as it should find ways to involve master’s 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	

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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:

All the full-time teaching staff hold PhD degrees. Still, the number of full-time staff should be increased in order to attain the minimum legal threshold and adequately achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.

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.

Concerning other staff development activities besides some continuing education possibilities, the committee did not receive any evidence concerning the broader staff development plan. 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 Criminal Law and Criminology should actively seek possibilities for involving visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme. Learning about other legal systems and judicial experience might offer the teaching staff a more comparative perspective regarding other European countries, not to mention the increasing importance of the EU legal framework to Moldovan national framework.

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**



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**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:

- Teaching staff are also involved in practical activities in the field of law (lawyers, judges).
- Teaching staff participate in conferences

### Recommendations:

- The number of full-time staff should be increased in order to attain the minimum legal threshold and adequately achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.
- 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 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 Criminal Law and Criminology 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.**

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

### Comments:

From annex D.5 (general data on staff) it can be confirmed that the study programme involves 11 teaching staff members, out of which 6 are full time (54,5%). All the full-time staff members have a PhD degree.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> The number of full-time staff should be increased in order to attain the minimum legal threshold and adequately achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme (see also criteria 3.3).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The age average of full-time staff is around 42 years. The oldest staff member is 66 years old and the youngest is 32, most of the academics being aged between 35 and 45 years. As more than 90% of the teaching staff is rather young, the sustainability of the programme can be ensured.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the CVs, the qualification of the teaching staff is adequate to disciplines taught. In terms of workload and supervised students, it appears from the annex that regarding the number of enrolled students in 2014, the supervision workload is of more than 7 students per member of teaching staff. Also, as some of the members of the teaching staff involved in this study programme are also involved in other master’s programmes, this number is likely to be bigger in their cases, which cannot be considered as adequate for achieving the learning outcomes.</p>	
<p><b>3.4. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Annex BIII.4 stipulates that 8 members of the academic staff have attended different training sessions destined to help them improve their teaching skills and methods. Some of those trainings took place in Moldova and others abroad. Also, the fact that most of the teachers 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.</p>	

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During the assessment visit, evidences of their real participation at these sessions (certificates of attendance, diplomas etc) were presented.	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>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>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"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> 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.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.6. REQUIREMENT: Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER mentions the fact that in 2014 one known Romanian professor in criminology gave open lectures for the master students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> The committee recommends that the department should actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching on the study programme.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The SER mentions the fact that the academics involved in this master's programme participated in several international conferences in Romania</p>	

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and Russian Federation. At the visit some evidences of these participations were presented.

Also, one member of staff is acting as visiting professor at the Romanian University Petre Andrei from Iasi (UPA) since 2013.

- **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.

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

#### Comments:

Despite the fact that teaching staff was not involved in the 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 B.III.8.1/8.2).

- **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.

Also, from Annex B.III.9, it seems that there is an annual editorial plan of the academics, with specific targets to be realized in terms of publication.

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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	
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-evaluation report (SER);</li> <li>• Annexes of SER;</li> <li>• Internal regulations;</li> <li>• Additional documents received during the site visit;</li> <li>• Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General comments:</b></p> <p>Although the committee was pleased to meet many satisfied students who all assured the positive image of the Criminal Law 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.</p> <p>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 Criminal Law 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</p>			

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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. 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).

It is recommended that the collecting of data regarding the employment of graduates would be more regular and systematic. Also, the number of unemployed graduates is very high (e.g. 36% in 2015), therefore the curriculum should correspond more to the real needs of the labour market in Moldova.

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.

### 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.. 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

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<p>surveys for alumni etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that the collecting data regarding the employment of graduates would be more regular and systematic. Also, the number of unemployed graduates is very high (e.g. 36% in 2015), therefore the curriculum should correspond more to the real needs of the labour market in Moldova.</li> <li>• It is recommended to formally collect and analyse the causes for dropping out.</li> </ul>
<p><b>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.</b></p>
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>In general, the admission requirements for students in the study programme Criminal Law are in accordance with the normative acts and are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme.</p> <p>According to the SER, admission to the "Criminal Law" master's programme is governed by the rules of organization and development of admission to higher education master cycle II, adopted and approved annually (<a href="http://usm.md/admitere/">http://usm.md/admitere/</a>) under the Rules for Admission to 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The national admission criteria include a specialty exam and evaluation of the IT and foreign language skills (English/French). <b>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.</b></p>
<p><b>4.2. REQUIREMENT: The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.</b></p>
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Although the SER claimed that study and career counselling is available to students, as well as the Center of Psychological Assistance for the</p>

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students within the Faculty of Psychology (offering assistance with solving problems of communication, social integration, conflicts, stress management etc.), the committee was not able to witness the awareness of the students or the alumni of other formal counselling services than career counselling.

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.

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. Also, students need to be more informed about the additional counselling services Moldova State University (and also the Faculty) is offering.

### 4.3. REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.

#### Comments:

Mobility options available to the students (especially external mobility options) are very limited. Although there are very few options, 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.

- **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).

### 4.4. REQUIREMENT: Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.

#### Comments:

None of the master students have taken part in mobility programs, which clearly can be seen as an area for improvement.

- **Recommendation:** The committee recommends the faculty members actively seek possibilities to support and encourage students to participate in international mobility programmes.



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<p><b>4.5. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.</b></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. Furthermore, they are not only formally involved but they also assured to the committee that the management of the faculty and the University considers their feedback and also implements their suggestions.</p> <p>Masters student <b>Lozan Alina</b> has been involved in the Council of Faculty during the period from 2013 till 2015. Also, master student in Criminal law, <b>Josan Cristina</b>, is the member of the Faculty Council.</p>	
<p><b>4.6. REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</b></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"> <li> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> 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> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.7. REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates' employment and is monitoring the evolution of graduates' career.</b></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</p>	

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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 relationships between the alumni and the (teaching) staff.

- **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, collecting the feedback from graduates could be more regular and systematic.

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

### Comments:

The committee was able to confirm that the students in the Criminal Law 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. The SER nor the additional documents provided more detailed data on the employment rate of the graduates.

The rate of employment of the gradutors from master degree, inclusively those who are enrolled in the studying ([Appendix B.IV.8.](#)):

<b>Employed:</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Students</b>
<i>in the professional domain</i>	41,1%	46,9%	56,0%	35,6%	42,3%	29,6%
<i>in another domain of law</i>	30,1%	18,8%	27,0%	27,4%	21,1%	26,8%
<b>Unemployed:</b>	28,8%	34,3%	17,0%	37,0%	36,6%	43,6%

The SER (IV.9) does briefly list the main (alleged) causes for dropping out, like departure abroad, medical maternity leave, the doctorate studies, etc. However, the Committee maintains an opinion that it would be beneficial for the Department to conduct a more in-depth analysis regarding these causes in the light of taking possible proactive steps to reduce the unemployment rate that currently is very high compared to some other Master of Law study programmes in Moldova that exist in similar socio-economic conditions.

- **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the collecting of the data regarding the employment of graduates would be more regular

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and systematic. Also, the number of unemployed graduates is very high (e.g. 36% in 2015), therefore the curriculum should correspond more to the real needs of the labour market in Moldova.

**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.**

Comments:

According to the SER, there exists a database in SUM where all the academic results of the master students are included. The professors notify of the study results methodic worker from Dean's office who adds all necessary information to the register that reflects all final evaluations of the students.

The dropout rate of the students on the Criminal Law study programme has been decreasing over the years and is currently very low: 16% in 2010; 12,3% in 2011; 13,2% in 2012; 5,8% in 2013; 2,8% in 2014. Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements.

According to the SER, the dropout is caused by several external as well as internal causes: transferring to other specialties, failing the examinations, going abroad, etc. It would be in the interests of the Department to formally collect and analyse the causes for dropping out.

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

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### General comments:

The budget planning in general is sustainable. However, the Faculty is 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 number of master's degree students on the master's degree program "Criminal Law" is stable or growing which indicates the sustainability of the study programme.

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. There was dissatisfaction among the students with the learning environment.

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.

### 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

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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:

The financial resources of the Moldova State University are represented at the [Appendix B.V.1](#). According to the SER the resources are sufficient for management of the academic process.

However, at the same time, the SER states that financial resources designed to the masters' degree programme are not sufficient for: covering the necessities of purchasing books on specialty for the academic program; organization of advances courses of the professional training of the University personnel (in present times they are performed by the personal costs of the workers); financial assistance of the professors who are publishing scientific and methodological researches and materials.

The committee agrees that in general the faculty seems underfinanced, which according to the understanding of the committee is the reason for many shortcomings, 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:

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No.	Registration year	Number of students registered	Number of students graduated
1.	2009	96	83
2.	2010	62	53
3.	2011	95	86
4.	2012	82	72
5.	2013	69	65
6.	2014	72	-

As indicated in the chart, the number of master’s degree students on the master’s degree program "Criminal Law" is in the recent years stable or growing which indicates the sustainability of the study programme.

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

**5.3.REQUIREMENT: Teaching and learning environments have been developed according to the teaching and learning objectives, include all facilities necessary for conducting studies in a given study programme and are of adequate capacity considering the number of students (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories, rooms for students independent work and recreation, video projectors, internet etc.).**

Comments:

SUM offers spaces (rooms, offices, auditoriums for students etc.) that correspond to the minimum requirements of material conditions necessary for studies during the Cycle II. In such a manner the Master degree Program in Criminal law has been divided for the hours of lectures and seminars at the auditorium 32 from the building 1, which has the space of 93,4 m<sup>2</sup> and offers 120 places which satisfy needs of 72 students for Master degree enrolled to the program.

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.

During the interviews with the students, dissatisfaction was expressed with the learning environment: according to them, there is no sufficient

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access to computers and Internet, also there are no projectors available, learning environment is outdated and also uncomfortable in terms of lighting and temperature.	
<p><b>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.</b></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"> <li>• <b>Recommendation:</b> 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.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5.5. REQUIREMENT: The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to 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 m<sup>2</sup> of functional space.</p>	

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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 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.