Accreditation of Study Programmes
Assessment Report

Institution: **The State University of Moldova**

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

Assessment committee:

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Dates of the assessment visit: 20/05/15

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 10.07.2015

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

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

Date: 07.09.2015

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

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

General Introduction:

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

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

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

The Professional Master programme "Public Law", which is being evaluated, is a programme with the duration of 1.5 years of studies, three semesters and 90 credits. The study programme was initially founded in 1999 and returned to its original title in 2008. The programme is managed by the Department of Constitutional and Administrative Law, who is also responsible for the monitoring and development of the curriculum.

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.

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. The study disciplines are presented in a logical succession.

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 public law.

The cooperation between the Department and the employers/the public sector needs improvement. In 2014, no students were enrolled in the study programme due to lack of interest. The department should actively and in cooperation with eventual employers of the graduates work on the attractiveness of the program. The committee suggests that the department organizes a comprehensive reconsidering of the programme involving representatives of the organizations (mostly in public sector) that could be envisaged as the possible employers of the graduates and in cooperation with those organizations elaborates possible amendments of the programme due to which the programme meets the requirements of the labour market

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

Employers and alumni mentioned that the Department should increase and intensify connections with public institutions (in addition to personal relations that teaching staff has). The Department should have a clear procedure to engage the mentioned groups in the development process.

The meeting with the alumni (no students were enrolled in 2014) confirmed that they are generally happy with the choice of teaching methods, although they thought that there could be less traditional lectures and connection between academic training and the reality could be improved. They wished there were courses taught by visiting instructors.

A very limited number of foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) is used during the studies. The Committee notes that syllabi contain literature published in Romania or in Russia, but the situation is troubling when it comes to literature in English, French, German, etc. It is understandable that the study programme focuses on Moldovan law, giving Moldovan sources a priority, but in order to provide wider, comparative perspective, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature. The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law in English.

The university has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship.

In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it would be advisable to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.

The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. There is academic continuity that at medium term ensures the sustainability of the study programme.

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.

Concerning other staff development activities besides some project-based opportunities for continuing education, 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.

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 committee recommends that the Department should even more actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching in the study programme.

The committee recommends that 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 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 Faculty in general should be more actively participating in the academic mobility programs. The International Law and Law of Foreign Economic Relations Department could serve as a good example in this respect.

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.

In year 2014, no students were enrolled in the Public Law Master's Programme. However, based on the documents made available to the committee and the discussions with the alumni, it is still possible to make some conclusions:

At the moment, mobility options on the Public Law study programme are very limited and the academic mobility is virtually non-existent. It is recommended to encourage (future) 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 advisable to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc) and monitor their employment more systematically. According to the information from the SER, the employment rate of the graduates is relatively high.

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

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

The trend of student numbers (admissions and graduations) is stable and indicates sustainability.

As the Faculty in general was at least partially under renovation, it was not possible for the committee to assess the conformity to the requirements of the teaching and learning environment as a whole. ICT devices are available for both Faculty members and students. The computer rooms look modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The positive trend is the using of *Moodle* platform providing the (potential) 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 (potential) students and academic staff of international databases and motivate them to use the few available.

Commendations:

- The academic staff is well aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.
- Good employment rate of the graduates;
- Teaching staff is balanced by age and there is a sign of academic continuity;

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- Teaching staff finds time to publish teaching materials for their courses;
- Internship is well organised and the University helps the students with a place of internship due to specific agreements or good cooperation with many employers;
- Budget planning has sustainable character;
- The usage of Moodle platform providing the students information regarding the courses online;
- Teaching staff is well experienced;

Recommendations

- The Department should actively and in cooperation with eventual employers of the graduates work on the attractiveness of the program. The committee suggests that the department organizes a comprehensive reconsidering of the programme involving representatives of the organizations (mostly in public sector) that could be envisaged as the possible employers of the graduates and in cooperation with those organizations elaborates possible amendments of the programme due to which the programme meets the requirements 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 public law.
- **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 include more comparative perspective in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law.
- 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 on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law in English.
- It would be advisable to give the students personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.
- In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it would be advisable to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.
- It is recommended to involve master's students in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research).

- 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 committee recommends that the Department should even more actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching in the study programme.
- The committee recommends that 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 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.
- **It is highly recommended to apply for the EU funding already available to Moldova, e.g the Erasmus + programme.**
- It is recommended to encourage (future) 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.
- 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 step forward but there is room for further improvements.
- It is advisable to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- The causes for dropping out should be formally collected and analysed.
- 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 (potential) students.
- The fact that in year 2014 there was no enough student applicants in order to enable to open the group is alarming and can be considered as a sign of unsustainability of the programme. Therefore the committee recommends that the department takes in cooperation with possible employers immediate action to increase the attractiveness of the programme.
- 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 (potential) 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 coursers/modules. This means that all courses on master's level must have the same amount of ECTS (5 ECTS) with the same number of contact hours and hours for individual work. Some courses also are "combined courses" and they offer 10 ECTS. The assessment committee recommends considering changing this rule in order to enable the universities offering master's level programmes some additional flexibility and to support the academic mobility.

II Assessment areas and requirements

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'	X		
Collected evidence: • Self-evaluation report (SER); • Annexes of SER; • Internal regulations; • Additional documents received during the site visit; • Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.			
General comments: Based on available documents and on the discussions during the assessment visit the assessment committee is convinced that the professional master programme in Public Law substantially conforms to requirements. The study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. Considering the majority of the 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.

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. The study disciplines are presented in a logical succession.

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 public law.

The cooperation between the Department and the employers/the public sector needs improvement. In 2014, no students were enrolled in the study programme due to lack of interest. The department should actively and in cooperation with eventual employers of the graduates work on the attractiveness of the program. The committee suggests that the department organizes a comprehensive reconsidering of the programme involving representatives of the organizations (mostly in public sector) that could be envisaged as the possible employers of the graduates and in cooperation with those organizations elaborates possible amendments of the programme due to which the programme meets the requirements of the labour market

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

Commendations:

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

Recommendations:

- The Department should actively and in cooperation with eventual employers of the graduates work on the attractiveness of the program. The committee suggests that the department organizes a comprehensive reconsidering of the programme involving representatives of the organizations (mostly in public sector) that could be envisaged as the possible employers of the graduates and in cooperation with those organizations elaborates possible amendments of the programme due to which the programme meets the requirements 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 public law.
- **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.

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

<u>Comments:</u>

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 programs in law should be consolidated, as there is currently a surplus of the programmes. The committee was informed that starting from June 1st 2015, there shall only be 5 law departments at SUM.

There is a Strategic Development Plan in place for the Faculty of Law for years 2012 – 2017

According to the SER, the Department of Constitutional and Administrative Law regularly plans their development through a scoring system of interdependent institutions and legal mechanisms. The mission and objectives of the studies in public law are in accordance with: the European Qualifications Framework; the National Qualifications Framework approved by Order Minister of Education No. 934 of 29.12. 2010; the University's strategic plan (Appendix B.1.1.1); the Strategic plan of the faculty (Appendix B.1.1.2.) and the Strategic plan of the department (Appendix B.1.1.3). In order to achieve the strategic plan, the department regularly designs its action plan (Appendix B.1.1.4), which is also coordinated with the action plan of the faculty, university and the law field. Based on the submitted documents and the interviews during the

assessment visit the assessment committee is convinced that the department regularly plans the development of the programme.

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

Comments:

The master's programme "Public Law" was authorized by Order of the Ministry of Education and Youth (Nr 385 of May 30, 2008; curriculum of study program see Annex D.1).

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

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

The Assessment committee finds that the Public Law master's programme substantially functions in accordance with the normative acts in force. The curriculum also respects the impact of the Bologna Higher Education System and is based on the ECTS transfer system.

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

Comments:

The title of the master program is "Public Law" and it is consistent with its content as implemented in the curriculum (see SER) as well as in the course descriptions (see the Study plan annexed to SER).

According to the SER, the study plan of the programme is based on an educational plan that includes a number of courses / modules, which are linked to the field of public law.

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

Comments:

According to the SER the courses are conducted as lectures and practical lessons. Lecturers combine theory with judicial practice and practical

lessons encouraged students to deal with practical cases to consolidate the theoretical knowledge. Students also are involved in the preparation of legal draft acts.

During the internship (duration 5 weeks; 10 ECTS) students are offered the possibility to achieve knowledge through practical experience. Students can organize the internship by themselves and in order they are not employed, they are distributed to specialized public authorities.

However, due to the fact that there were no students enrolled to this programme, this information could be confirmed at the visit only by alumni of this master's programme.

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

Comments:

According to the SER the objectives and learning outcomes of the program constantly take into 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 programmes of other HEIs in Moldova.

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

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

Comments:

The SER and the discussions during the assessment visit confirmed that the objectives, content and the learning outcomes of the study

programme are in general distinguishable from those of the bachelor's study programme.

However, the discussions with the employers and alumni revealed that there is a certain danger of overlap between some of the study disciplines taught during the first and second cycles (for example between the General theory of law and Constitutional law). Still, it can be argued that the master's programme deals with similar subject matter in greater depth. According to the SER, the Department views this as ensuring continuity of the first cycle undergraduate programs.

- **Recommendation:** 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 public law.

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

Comments:

The curriculums as well as the additional documents clearly show a logical structure of the master programme. According to the SER, the subjects of study are presented in a logical sequence and assigned to semesters and provide an ascent in teaching. During the first semester students study "Current concepts in constitutional law", and later, as a continuation of this field, in the second semester, they study "The protection of fundamental rights in constitutional justice of Moldova".

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

Comments:

In the academic year 2014-2015 there were no students enrolled in the Public Law study programme due to the reduced number of application in comparison to the minimum number of students required for a programme to be offered. The programme is considered to be too theoretical and lacking of interest by the potential applicants. The committee believes that this might be an indication that the study programme does not take into consideration the major trends of the labour market. The need for improved cooperation with the employers was also underlined during the discussions with both the academic staff and the alumni and the employers.

- **Recommendation:** The department should actively and in cooperation with eventual employers of the graduates work on the attractiveness of the program. The committee cannot believe that there is no need for high-level Public Law specialists in Moldova, especially when taking into account that the state is still in an active reform phase.

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

Comments:

According to SER, the approval of the programme is organised as a continuous process, including the feedback from students, staff and employers. Also, staff is informed about the development plan. According to the information made available to the committee, 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. 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.

From discussions with alumni, although students are in theory involved in the decision-making processes and the development of the study programme, at least the ones attending the meeting said they were not involved in such activities but had some knowledge of such developments in the past.

The above could be verified during the assessment visit only partially. During the assessment visit the committee could learn that the representatives of employers were not satisfied with the development process, because they claimed they were never asked for suggestions for curriculum developments and changes.

- **Recommendation:** The committee suggests that the department organizes a comprehensive reconsidering of the programme involving representatives of the organizations (mostly in public sector) that could be envisaged as the possible employers of the graduates and in cooperation with those organizations elaborates possible amendments of the programme due to which the programme meets the requirements of the labour market.

1.10. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of a study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.	

Comments:

The interview with the academic employees conducted during the site visit proves the relative awareness of the teaching staff of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.

According to the academic staff, the objective of the study programme is to strengthen the knowledge of the students in practice and thus enable them to work on professional positions in the public sphere (like the Parliament, Supreme Court, etc.) or continue their education at doctoral level. The master's studies should provide more specific knowledge of the procedures and provide additional value to the bachelor's studies.

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

Comments:

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

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

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		X	
Collected evidence: - Self-evaluation report (SER); - Annexes of SER; - Internal regulations; - Additional documents received during the site visit; - Interviews with the management, teaching staff, students, graduates, employers.			

General comments:

Employers and alumni mentioned that the Department should increase and intensify connections with public institutions (in addition to personal relations that teaching staff has). The Department should have a clear procedure to engage the mentioned groups in the development process.

The meeting with the alumni (no students were enrolled in 2014) confirmed that they are generally happy with the choice of teaching methods, although they thought that there could be less traditional lectures and connection between academic training and the reality could be improved. They wished there were courses taught by visiting instructors.

A very limited number of foreign legal literature (journal articles and books) is used during the studies. The Committee notes that syllabi contain literature published in Romania or in Russia, but the situation is troubling when it comes to literature in English, French, German, etc. It is understandable that the study programme focuses on Moldovan law, giving Moldovan sources a priority, but in order to provide wider, comparative perspective, it is essential to include non-Moldovan, non-Romanian and non-Russian literature. The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law in English.

The university has agreements or good cooperation with many public and private institutions, where the students can perform their internship.

It would be advisable to give the students personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it would be advisable to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.

The SER and meetings showed that teaching staff and students are asked for feedback and their feedback is considered by appropriate organs and officials. However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers (some were quite critical) also participate in the evaluation of study process. If they are not involved, the Department should involve them as they can provide useful feedback.

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's students in broader research and development activities, increase comparative perspective). As a result, the study programme fulfils the following requirements partially. The Committee understands that some areas of improvement are on Faculty or University level, and thus demand action on Faculty or

University level, but still inevitably affect the specific study programmes and their quality.

Commendations:

- Teaching staff finds time to publish teaching materials for their courses.
- Internship is well organised and the university guarantees the students a place of internship due to specific agreements or good cooperation with many companies.
- The ratio between master's students and supervisors has been very favourable (based on the number of master's students in previous years, no students were enrolled in 2014).

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to include more comparative perspective in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law.
- 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 on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law in English.
- It would be advisable to give the students personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.
- In connection with the recognition of prior learning, it would be advisable to consider increasing the proportion of elective courses in the curriculum in order to (1) provide more choices to students and (2) make academic mobility more attractive.
- Involve master's students in broader research and development activities (beyond their individual research).

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

Comments:

The SER is short and general on this issue, and half of the response lists specific conclusions based on past surveys.

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 and teaching staff (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 Committee could not discuss this with students as no students were enrolled in 2014). The results are taken into account when planning and implementing improvements. Teaching staff told the Committee that the study programme is adjusted also according to practical needs/expectations from the society. The proposals for changes to the study programme are first approved by the Department, then sent to the Faculty and finally to the senate. The Committee received mixed information on whether and how students, alumni and employers are actually involved in the development processed: some said that they are involved, some regretted that they are not. Employers and alumni mentioned that the Department should increase and intensify connections with public institutions (in addition to personal relations that teaching staff has). 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 is very short on this issue. However, 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, some courses have a textbook wrote 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 takes, at the beginning of the course, to places/institutions where the graduated students may potentially find employment in order to generate interest, and to explain why and what they will study during the semester. The meeting with alumni (no students were enrolled in 2014) confirmed that they are generally happy with the choice of teaching methods, although they thought that there could be less traditional lectures and connection between academic training and the reality could be improved. They wished there were courses taught by visiting instructors.

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

Comments:

The SER concentrates on technical and electronic means which support teaching and learning processes.

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

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

The programme contains courses that are related to human rights and fundamental freedoms (e.g. Protection of fundamental rights in the constitutional justice of the Republic of Moldova) or could benefit from comparative perspective (e.g. Current concepts in constitutional law, Determinative terms of the quality and efficiency of the contemporary justice), but their lists of literature contain almost no foreign materials. Teaching staff admits that a very limited amount of foreign legal literature is available and even what is available tends to be 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. Alumni emphasised that the study programme should include more the practice of other states (again demanding foreign materials). The Committee saw that legal literature databases (e.g. WestLaw, LexisNexis, HeinOnline) are not available at the university, but there are numerous journals which are openly accessible and provide high quality articles.

- **Recommendation:** The library should acquire, as the first step, some well-known up-to-date textbooks on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and constitutional law in English.

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

<u>Comments:</u>

The internship is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The curriculum contains a compulsory five week internship (10 credits). The objectives of internship are defined in the regulation of internship and also available in the blank portfolio of internship which is given to each student performing 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.

As no students were enrolled in 2014, the Committee was not able discuss internship with students.

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

Comments:
The university has agreements or good cooperation with 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. Alumni expressed satisfaction that the university guarantees them a place of internship. The Committee learnt that the students who already work can perform their internship at their current workplaces. This opportunity involves a risk. If the current workplace is not related to Public Law, the internship may not achieve its learning outcomes.

| 2.6. | REQUIREMENT: Assessment of learning outcomes of students is performed in accordance with the existing requirements. Assessment methodology is consistent with learning outcomes and includes feedback supporting student development. | |

Comments:
The assessment of learning outcomes is regulated by national and internal normative documents. The assessment as a whole is comprised of the initial assessment at the beginning of study process, the current assessments during the semester (60%) and the final assessment at the end of semester (40%). The SER lists different assessment methods that 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 choses and matched to learning outcomes, especially when considering the fact that all courses are of 5 credits and contact hours are quite similar per 1 credit. The content of assessment methods (e.g. exam questions) are regularly updated. The SER states that the quality of applied assessment method (e.g. specific questions, tests, exams) are assured by the head of the Chair, of the Department and of Quality Management. If they are not subject matter experts, how do they assess and ensure the substantial quality questions, tests, exams, etc. in question? The Committee is not convinced that students receive personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments in order to support student development.

- **Recommendation**: It would be advisable to give the students personal feedback regarding their performance at different assessments

in order to support student development.

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

<u>Comments:</u>

The SER is very brief on this topic.

The recognition of prior learning and work experience is mainly regulated by national normative documents. The meetings showed that there is confusion what the recognition of prior learning and work experience means. The Committee was interested if students can transfer the credits earned, individual courses taken in other Moldovan or foreign higher education institutions at master's or higher level to the MSU as part of their studies at the MSU. The Committee understands that according to national regulation, work experience is recognised only in the framework on vocational higher education. After the meetings, the Committee believes that necessary regulation is in place for the recognition of prior learning, but there is little actual experience. The recognising prior learning is closely connected to academic mobility, i.e. if the credits earned during academic mobility are recognised without unduly 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. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.**	

<u>Comments:</u>

The evaluation of study process has clearly defined purposes and its results are used to improve curriculum, courses, teaching methods etc. and to select teaching staff. There are several organs or officials who are involved in the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes, e.g. Dean, Quality Assurance Commission, Quality Management Department, and the Pro-rector responsible for didactic activity. The SER and meetings showed that teaching staff and students are asked for feedback and their feedback is considered by appropriate organs and officials. However, the Committee received mixed information on whether and how alumni and employers (some were quite critical) 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. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **Students are involved in research and development activities, the supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, applied projects, final thesis) is well organised and the satisfaction rate with the quality of supervision is high.**	

Comments:

Each student has a supervisor appointed by the Department. The study programme involves 8 instructors, but no students were enrolled in 2014. In 2013, 17 master's students were enrolled. When considering the number of teaching staff and students in previous years, the ratio is very favourable and students should receive very good supervision. Students have the freedom to choose the topics for their master's theses. The meetings with 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 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 shows that teaching staff participates in research projects.

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

General comments:

The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. There is academic continuity that at medium term ensures the sustainability of the study programme.

Concerning other staff development activities besides some project-based opportunities for continuing education, 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. 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 committee recommends that the Department should even more actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching in the study programme.

The committee recommends that 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 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 Faculty in general should be more actively participating in the academic mobility programs. The International Law and Law of Foreign Economic Relations Department could serve as a good example in this respect.

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

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

Commendations:

- The teaching staff are well qualified, there is academic continuity.

- The teaching staff has some international experience.

Recommendations:

- 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 committee recommends that the Department should even more actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching in the study programme.
- The committee recommends that 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 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.
- 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 B15 it appears that the programme is taught by 8 teaching staff members, out of which 6 are full-time (75%). All of the full-time staff have a PhD degree. This means that the number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation.

3.2. REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.	

Comments:

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

3.3. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The total number and qualification of teaching staff is – based on their responsibilities, workload and the number of supervised students – sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level.**	

Comments:

From the SER and CV's it appears that the qualification of the teaching staff is adequate to disciplines taught. In terms of workload and supervised students, it appears from the SER that the supervision workload is around 2-4 students per member of teaching staff at this particular MA programme. However, despite the fact that the academics involved in this study programme are not involved in other master's programme, they are still involved in the BA programme, the total number of students is around 7-8 per each member of the academic staff, as per discussions and information gathered at the visit.

3.4. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.**	

Comments:

From the SER it appears that members of the teaching staff have adequate teaching competence. At the same time, the SER stipulates that members of teaching staff have attended various scientific events, thus allowing them to improve their research and teaching methods.

At the visit evidences of these participations were made available (certificates of attendance, proofs of participation). Still, due to the fact that not all of members of the teaching staff attended those trainings and scientific events, there is room for improvement.

- **Recommendation:** The department should encourage all members of academic staff to participate in the programs for improving their teaching methods.

3.5. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The staff development system is effective: the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement, staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution.**	

Comments:

The SER stipulates that a strategic planning of continuing education is in place, assuring thus opportunities for staff improvement. At the visit, evidences of the information presented in the SER were provided (participation in trainings within other institutions, study visits etc). However, most of those opportunities lack of substance and should therefore be more effective.

Concerning other staff development activities besides some project-based opportunities for continuing education, the committee did not

receive any evidence concerning the broader staff development plan, including conducting systematic appraisal interviews with the staff and other methods of staff development.

- Recommendation: 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.

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

Comments:

There are no visiting members within the teaching staff, except for one Professor, specialist in law from the University Virgili and Rovira in Taragona city, Spain, who will give some lectures in 2015 within a mobility scheme. The institution makes confusion between full-time members of teaching staff that also act as legal professionals and visiting staff.

- The committee recommends that the Department should even more actively seek possibilities for involving more visiting professors in the teaching in the study programme.

3.7.	REQUIREMENT: The members of the full-time teaching staff of a higher education institution regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks.	

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

- The committee recommends that 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 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 Faculty in general should be

more actively participating in the academic mobility programs. The International Law and Law of Foreign Economic Relations Department could serve as a good example in this respect.

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

Comments:

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

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

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

Comments:

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

At the visit, proofs of individual plan for teachers, as well as reports by head of Department and other relevant evidences were provided.

4. STUDENTS	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements

mark with 'X'		X	

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

General comments:

In year 2014, no students were enrolled in the Public Law Master's Programme. However, based on the documents made available to the committee and the discussions with the alumni, it is still possible to make some conclusions.

At the moment, mobility options on the Public Law study programme are very limited and the academic mobility is virtually non-existent. It is recommended to encourage (future) 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 advisable to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc) and monitor their employment more systematically.

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

Commendations:

- The employment rate of the graduates is relatively high.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to encourage (future) 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.
- 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 step forward but there is room for further improvements.
- It is advisable to seek ways how to formally strengthen the ties with graduates (alumni club, events for graduates, satisfaction surveys for alumni etc).
- The causes for dropping out should be formally collected and analysed.

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

Comments:

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

According to the SER, admission to the "Public Law" programme is governed by the rules of organization and development of admission to higher education master cycle II, adopted and approved annually (http://usm.md/admitere/) under the Rules for Admission to higher education master cycle II, approved by Government Decision nr.1455 of 24.12.2007. The Dean informed the committee that annually, the criteria for enrolment of students is approved annually by the Senate.

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

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

Comments:

Although the SER claimed that study and career counselling is available to students, the committee was not able to witness the awareness of the 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. The committee received no information about any psychological counselling services available to the students in MSU.

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

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

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

Comments:

Students are provided with some mobility options but they are very limited. In the Moldova State University operates the Department of International Relations which is responsible for implementing internal and external mobility mechanism. Ministry of Education provides external mobility through cooperation and assistance programs with other universities furthermore The faculty has signed cooperation agreements with the Faculty of Law of the "Babes-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania) and the Faculty of Law of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi (Romania), and the Faculty of Law of the Vilnius University (Lithuania).

- **Recommendation:** The committee encourages the faculty to seek more academic mobility opportunities and to raise the awareness amongst students.

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

Comments:

Although master students can apply to international mobility programs, the academic mobility on the Public Law study programme has been virtually non-existent.

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

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

Comments:

As stated in the SER, students are involved in the decision-making processes at various levels of the university. Furthermore they are not only formally involved but they also assured us that the management of the faculty and the university considers their feedback and also implements their suggestions.

Students are involved in the activity of Faculty Council and Faculty Syndicate, Alliance of MSU Students of the Faculty of Law Council, Self-government of the MSU students (ASUSM), also ad-hoc committees. Master students expose their opinions through questionnaires, and through representatives in the composition of the Committee for Quality Assurance of the Faculty of Law.

4.6. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.	

Comments:

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.

- **Recommendation:** All of the study programmes under evaluation lack a systematic approach towards academic fraud. In many cases the discovery of academic fraud lies upon academic staff (for example thesis supervisors). Therefore, the committee urges the Faculty to adapt a unified and more systematic approach towards preventing plagiarism and actively seek opportunities how to teach students about anti-plagiarism and academic ethics (e.g course for academic writing, master's seminars etc).

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

Comments:

Although the SER stated that the Centre for Career Guidance and Employment that is responsible for tracking professional development, we were not able to confirm that there actually was a formal system in place for keeping touch with the graduates. Much of this communications and monitoring of graduates career is done informally and is based on individual connections and relationships between the alumni and the (teaching) staff.

Monitoring the faculty's graduates' employment could be more systematic. Much of this communications and monitoring of graduates career is done informally and is based on individual connections and relationships between the alumni and the (teaching) staff. There is a need for a systematic and institutionalized approach towards tracking the employment of faculty's graduates.

- **Recommendation**: The committee recommends to consider organising annual events e.g. conferences, seminars or other types of networking meetings with the alumni of the faculty. Also the collecting feedback from graduates could be more regular and systematic.

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:

According to the SER, 70% of the graduates of the last 5 years are employed according to obtained qualification that can be considered as a positive indicator.

According to the SER the monitoring of graduates' career path is made according to various criteria, such as: employees in the specialization field; employees in other areas of professional activity; those who are not available (largely lost contact because of emigration and seasonal

activities abroad).

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, master students' performances are fixed in report cards and also each lecturer shall complete group journal where they will also register exam results. The responsible Methodist completes a register which lists all the final evaluations. Moreover, in the MSU there is a centralized database, which includes all academic performances of each programme.

Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements: the average number of abandonment for these four years is 3 persons per year, which is approximately 13 percent. However, 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.

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
Collected evidence:			

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.

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

The trend of student numbers (admissions and graduations) is stable and indicates sustainability.

As the Faculty in general was at least partially under renovation, it was not possible for the committee to assess the conformity to the requirements of the teaching and learning environment as a whole. ICT devices are available for both Faculty members and students. The computer rooms look modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The positive trend is the using of *Moodle* platform providing the (potential) 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 (potential) 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 is providing the students with 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 (potential) students.
- The fact that in year 2014 there was no enough student applicants in order to enable to open the group is alarming and can be

considered as a sign of unsustainability of the programme. Therefore the committee recommends that the department takes in cooperation with possible employers immediate action to increase the attractiveness of the programme.

- 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 (potential) 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. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **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.**

<u>Comments:</u>

According to SER the institution's financial resources are sufficient for study organization (Appendix B. 5.1.2). According to the plan of strategies and policies for quality assurance within the university master studies and action plan there are an amount of planned and implemented activities, which aim campus, economic activities, human resources, including staff training at the workplace (Appendix B 5.1.1).

The committee still feels – especially taking into account that there were no students enrolled in 2014 - that the Public Law programme and the faculty in general seems underfinanced, which according to the understanding of the committee is the reason for many shortcomings described above, e.g. the general salary level of the academic stuff, 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.

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

<u>Comments:</u>

According to the SER, the number of students and graduates in the last 5 years shows some stability (as presented below):

Year of enrolment	No. of enrolled students	No. of graduates
2010	19	16
2011	27	25
2012	29	23
2013	17	15

as well as at the Public Law program (Appendix B 5.2.1.) and the budget of the university. Regarding the budget, from year 2010 to 2014, the revenues have increased by approximately 10% and so have the expenditures - by approximately 16%. The committee is confirmed that these numbers clearly show the sustainable character of budget planning.

The fact that in year 2014 there was no enough student applicants in order to enable to open the group is alarming and can be considered as a sign of unsustainability of the programme. Therefore the committee recommends that the department takes in cooperation with possible employers immediate action to increase the attractiveness of the programme.

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

Comments:

According to SER the university provides sufficient areas for conducting courses and practical lessons, including areas for recreation (see more detailed data in SER). 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.

5.4. REQUIREMENT: Both the conduct of studies and other activities of a higher education institution are supported by up-to-date information technology solutions, including the study information system, e-learning opportunities, and communication portals for students and teaching staff.	

Comments:

According to the SER, the students have access to computers in the library reading rooms and to free and unlimited Wi-Fi. During the observations made by the committee during the assessment visit, the number of computers is sufficient. ICT devices are available for both

Faculty members and students. The computer rooms look in general modern and meet the basic contemporary standards. The staff and the (potential) students are relatively motivated to use ICT techniques.

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 *Moodle* platform providing the students with information regarding the courses online.

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

5.5. <u>REQUIREMENT:</u> **The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.**	

Comments:

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

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

Comments:

According the SER, the library is equipped with 1,809,725 of books, 1445 PhD thesis; 4074 rare rooks, 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^2 of functional space.

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

- **Recommendation:** The library needs major investment, especially regarding field specific legal literature in English, French or German. The 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.