UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN CLUJ-NAPOCA

EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the *University of Art and Design* (UAD) in Cluj-Napoca. The evaluation visits took place from 5 to 7 December 2012 and from 17 to 20 February 2013 in the framework of the project "Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching - Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities", which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 Law on Education and the various related normative acts.

While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

1.1 The Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:
- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:
- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 The UAD's profile

The University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca is a public higher education institution of arts. It was established in 1926, under the name of School of Fine Arts, having only two specialisations: painting and sculpture. Since then, it has undergone several changes (concerning its name, the content of studies, even its location), until 2001 when it took its current name, enlarging in the meanwhile (between 1990 and 2001) its training areas to the whole domain of visual arts.

The UAD comprises two faculties; the faculty of fine arts with three departments, which offers six BA programmes and five MA programmes, and the faculty of decorative arts and design with three departments, which offers four BA programmes and four MA programmes. Furthermore, the UAD comprises a doctoral school offering one PhD programme and a psycho-pedagogical studies department, which offers one teacher training programme in the field of fine and decorative arts.

In the academic year 2011-2012 the total number of students in the UAD was 949 (713 in BA programmes and 296 in MA programmes). Out of them, 592 were budget-funded students (399 in BA and 193 in MA programmes), while 357 were fee-paying students (314 in BA and 43 in MA programmes). The number of academic staff in the same academic year was 77, thus resulting in an average "student to academic staff ratio" of 12:3.

All study programmes offered by the UAD (10 BA programmes and nine MA programmes) are accredited in accordance with Romanian legislation by the national quality assurance authority (ARACIS). Apart from the accreditation procedures, the study programmes of the UAD were evaluated in 2011 and ranked according to Romanian legislation in category A (best performing programmes) in the domain of "visual arts". It is worth noting that in the lists of study programmes' rankings the domain "visual arts" appears in 14 Romanian universities and that only in four of them (including the UAD) the study programmes are ranked in category A. Furthermore, following the national classification procedure for Romanian universities, the UAD was included in the category described as "universities for education and scientific research and artistic creation".

The UAD is located in the city of Cluj-Napoca, which is the second most important university centre in Romania after Bucharest. There are six public and four private universities in Cluj-Napoca (including the UAD). Furthermore, Cluj-Napoca is an attractive university area for international students, combining excellent geographical positioning with reasonable cost of living.

The advantages for the UAD being located in Cluj-Napoca derive from the very rich cultural and economic environment. As it is stated in the SER (p. 5), in the region of Cluj-Napoca the employment provisions are higher than in the other regions of Romania and employers/companies from this region expect that available jobs will increase by 25%. So far there are no data for the employment provisions/opportunities in the creative industries sector, which is the most important area of employment for UAD's graduates. However, based on the data provided by the project *Graduates and the Labour Market*, initiated by UEFISCDI (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding) and CNFIS (National Council for Funding Higher Education) and implemented in the UAD in 2011, it can be asserted that the employment rate of former UAD's students two years after graduation is rather high, ranging from 63% for the graduates of the fine arts faculty to 80% for the graduates of the decorative arts and design faculty (SER, p. 5).

However, and apart from this positive and optimistic provision, in the SWOT analysis of the UAD (SER, p. 27), the fragility of the creative industries sector at regional and national level is considered a threat that may negatively affect the integration of UAD graduates within the labour market.

The UAD is dispersed across the city of Cluj-Napoca, conducting its activities in eleven different locations (two of them outside the city). This situation allows the UAD to interact culturally with the city and society, helped also by the fact that it owns some of the most iconic buildings in Cluj-Napoca. The UAD considers its involvement in organising cultural and artistic events (exhibition projects, professional conferences, symposia and workshops, art festivals etc.) as highly valuable and will contribute to the cultural and artistic development of the public. On the other hand, the dispersion throughout the city causes difficulties in the communication among students and in the organisation of the various activities, while in parallel the dispersion engenders supplementary costs.

The UAD is part of the Union of Cluj-Napoca Universities (UUC), which is aimed at improving the educational system through the creation of multi- and transdisciplinary study programmes and research projects, as well as at a better use of research equipment and technologies (SER, p. 19). The evaluation team recommends that the UAD further fosters its collaboration with other universities in Cluj-Napoca in order to improve the attractiveness of

the higher education environment of the region by strengthening its comparative advantages, in order to maximise the offerings of the higher education system to the region and in order to maximise the benefits of the partnerships.

1.3   The evaluation process

The self-evaluation

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the self-evaluation group consisting of the entire management of the university (in total 14 members) and chaired by Prof. Radu Moraru, Vice-Rector for research and quality assurance. The self-evaluation group prepared the self-evaluation report (SER) and sent it electronically to the evaluation team along with the related appendices on 12 November 2012. The SER was accompanied by appendices, which were uploaded by the university on the electronic platform of the project.

The evaluation team appreciated the work done in the SER, which covered almost all issues and was supplemented with an impressive amount of informative appendixes and annexes. In this regard, we considered the SER a comprehensive, informative, frank and critical analysis, which reflected the strong commitment of the UAD community towards improvement, presenting at the same time the vision and the expectations of the UAD for the future.

The two site visits

The two site visits of the evaluation team to the UAD took place from 5 to 7 December 2012 and 17 to 20 February 2013, respectively. During the two visits, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the situation of the UAD with many of its actors and with the main stakeholders, namely:
- With the leadership of the UAD
- With the leadership, with members of the academic staff and with students from the two faculties of the UAD
- With members of the academic senate and the administration council
- With members of the internal quality assurance structures
- With key persons in charge of research and doctoral studies
- With key administrative staff
- With student representatives
- With a representative group of international students
- With external partners.

There were also intense and in-depth discussions with the Rector, Professor Radu Solovastru, with the President of the Senate, Professor Ioan Sbarciu, and with the self-evaluation group.

Therefore, the evaluation team had the opportunity to meet the broad spectrum of actors at the UAD. All meetings and discussions were efficiently organised by the Vice-Rector Mara Ratiu who acted as the liaison person between the university and the evaluation team. The logistics of the two site visits were carried out by Mr. Dragos Ciripoiu on behalf of UEFISCDI.

The evaluation team wants to express its gratitude to the UAD community for the openness and willingness to discuss related issues during our meetings. Finally, the evaluation team would like to express its sincere thanks to the Rector, Professor Radu Solovastru, and his team for the organisation before and during our two visits and for their warm hospitality.

In between the two visits the university provided the evaluation team with requested additional documentation, which was uploaded in due time on the electronic platform of the project.

The evaluation report

This evaluation report is in line with the aims of the IEP as outlined above. Thus, it focuses on the current strengths and weaknesses of the UAD regarding its capacity for change in view of the contextual opportunities and threats and expresses a number of recommendations that may be taken into account for the future development of the university.

The evaluation report takes into account all the data provided to the evaluation team by the SER and corresponding additional information. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the overall analysis, the comments and the recommendations are based on two intense but rather short visits; a two-day preliminary visit and a three-day main visit. The evaluation team also collected a significant amount of information on the Romanian higher education system, especially in regards to the recent reform, but it is not possible for the analysis to go into such details. The comments and recommendations, therefore, will be confined mostly to major issues of concern to UAD. The recommendations, together with the corresponding reasoning and analysis, appear underlined in the text of the evaluation report, while a summary of recommendations is presented in the last section of the report. Finally, it should be noted that throughout the body of the evaluation report, many ideas of the evaluation team appear, which we do not consider as real recommendations but as reflections which the UAD may consider.

The evaluation team

The evaluation team consisted of the following members:
- Tatjana Volkova, former Rector, School of Business and Finance, Latvia, team chair
- Georg Schulz, former Rector, University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria

- Éva Reka Fazékas, MA student, University of Szeged, Hungary
- Dionyssis Kladis, professor emeritus, University of the Peloponnese, Greece, former Secretary for Higher Education in Greece, team coordinator

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

2.1 Philosophy of the UAD: Norms and values/Vision - mission - strategic goals

From the key documents provided by the UAD to the evaluation team, namely from the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the university charter and its strategic plan 2013-2016, the evaluation team could not find a straight and direct reference to the vision of the university. However, in the SER (p. 8) and in the strategic plan (p. 4-5), there are two references to the "credo" of the UAD and its mission that can also be considered as describing the vision of the UAD. The reference to the credo is as follows: "The university credo is that the artistic higher education is an important component within any society as it plays a key role in the opening of new horizons through major contributions to the building of contemporary culture and to the use of new technologies of information and communication within the global knowledge based society."

The mission of the university follows as a consequence: "Consequently, the fundamental mission of UAD is to provide an education of highest quality to those who intend to pursue a career in the field of visual arts (fine arts, decorative arts and design) and to contribute, through the artistic creation and research conducted by its members, to the development of the society by the satisfaction of the requirements of the community, but also by their anticipation and influence. Tradition, creativity and innovation are the key concepts of our philosophy, orienting our teaching, creation and research activities towards the investigation of the heritage — both universal and national — the scrutiny of contemporary (visual) culture and the examination of latest scientific theories and technologies, all these leading to new forms of artistic creation and practices and to the improvement of the (post)industrial social and economic environment."

Finally, the vision of the UAD can also be assumed from article 7 of the university charter, where it is stated that the UAD aims to be an artistic university that offers education of high quality standards, carries out artistic creation of high value and complex cultural activities and conducts advanced research in the field of arts and in related fields also promoting interdisciplinarity of research.

The evaluation team realised that the above values determine the overall route of the UAD. We have noted that the UAD is a leading institution in the field of art in Romania and it is demonstrating a strong tradition in art education. Furthermore, we are really confident that the UAD will continue to play an important role in Romanian society by fulfilling its mission and following values embedded into its culture. In this regard, we consider it worthwhile to

notice and praise the strong commitment of the UAD to establish a contemporary art centre in Cluj-Napoca and to make an impact on the perception of contemporary art in society.

Based on the above mission statement and on its charter, the UAD has constructed its strategic plan for the period 2013-2016. The evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the key issues of the strategic plan during the second site visit in a joint meeting with the members of the administration council of the UAD and with members of the academic senate. The strategic plan contains the key strategic goals of the UAD analysed in priority axes, then in directions of action and finally in specific objectives under each direction of action. The strategic plan is accompanied by the list of the performance indicators that are to be used for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan.

The evaluation team considers the strategic plan a very good starting platform for the further development of the UAD. However, the implementation of this platform requires a concrete action plan (operational plan). In the case of the UAD the transformation of the key strategic goals into specific actions is not always clear. For example, the specific objectives appearing under each action line cannot be considered as actions. The action plan should contain concrete actions, which should be prioritised, cost-analysed and time-specific within the validity period of the strategic plan.

The evaluation team understands that the list of performance indicators accompanying the strategic plan plays the role of the action plan. In fact, this list contains actions related to the specific objectives. However, the mere reference to objectives and actions in a neutral or horizontal sense cannot be considered a real action plan, which primarily requires prioritisation of objectives and actions. This may be acceptable in theory, but in practice priorities must be set in order to ensure that significant goals are not confused with less important ones. On the other hand, the mere reference to objectives and actions, which are not properly quantified, cannot act as performance indicators aiming at monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan.

During our discussions with the leadership of the UAD, it became clear that the university does not develop a more concrete action plan with properly quantified performance indicators because of the uncertainty regarding the available resources. The evaluation team regards this uncertainty as a serious constraint; however it considers necessary for the UAD to start acting proactively to that end. This means that the university should define its goals based on SMART approach (according to which goals have to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-specific), quantify them through key performance indicators and, at the end of the period, note which indicators were reached and which ones could not be achieved because of the lack of necessary resources. In this regard, the evaluation team recommends a proactive strategic planning, transformed into cost-estimated actions that

should be prioritised and put into a time schedule irrespective of the annual budget to the UAD. This action plan should be associated with properly quantified key performance indicators defined in advance and also in a proactive manner.

Furthermore, the evaluation team wishes to raise the question regarding the instruments that oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the strategic goals and the key performance indicators. In this regard, the evaluation team recommends that this task should be assigned to a specific body attached directly to the rector or to one of the vice-rectors. This body should also have the task of assessing the validity of the strategic goals and the respective key performance indicators and reconsider them in all cases that the goals and the key performance indicators could not be achieved.

Finally, the evaluation team would like to focus on a strategic issue, which it considers of great importance for the UAD. It has to do with the specificity of the arts universities – an issue that has to be understood by the political and the academic environment in which the UAD operates. In the SWOT analysis in the SER (p. 26), the UAD refers to the potential marginalisation of the arts universities by the relevant ministry and the associated bodies, which is considered a threat. In order to cope with this threat, the UAD has considered improving collaboration with other arts universities and faculties among its action lines for the future (SER, p. 25). The evaluation team fully supports these efforts and considers necessary for all involved authorities and actors to consider the importance of art education and research at the level of higher education taking also due account of their specificities.

2.2   Governance and institutional decision-making

The leadership system of the UAD is rector-centred. The rector appoints the two vice-rectors and he/she chairs the administration council, consisting also of the vice-rectors, the deans, the administrative general director of the university and one student representative. According to the Romanian higher education law, the administration council ensures the operational management of the universities and applies the strategic decisions of the academic senate, which is considered the highest decision-making body at university level. This means that at the highest governance level, the Romanian higher education system follows the dual governance model with the parallel existence of two collective bodies, the senate and the administration council. It is important to note that in the Romanian system the members of the administration council cannot be members of the senate in parallel. This means that there is a complete distinction regarding membership between the two major bodies of a university. However, in the UAD, the president of the senate, upon invitation, participates in the council's meetings, while the rector and vice-rectors participate, upon

invitation too, in the senate's meetings, thus ensuring the permanent and close collaboration between the two bodies.

The evaluation team noted with satisfaction that the governance system of the UAD has reached an equilibrium state without any serious internal conflicts. It is important to note here that, according to the higher education law, the president of the academic senate is not considered a management position (like the rector, vice-rectors and deans), even though the senate is considered a management body (like the administration council and the faculty councils). In this respect, it could be said that the law prevents conflicts and tensions arising within the university. However, what team observed in the UAD was that the president of the senate plays an important role in the overall management of the university at the highest level even though his responsibilities are limited according to the law. This is further evidence for the good relationships that have been established in the UAD between the various governance and management bodies. According to the evaluation team, the present governance status and operation, together with the established strategic management and quality management, set a good background for implementation of the mission of the university.

Autonomy and constraints

Although one of the aims of the current higher education reform is to increase university autonomy, and the team understands that Romanian universities have autonomy in many respects, it also noticed considerable constraints in the legal and financial environment in which the UAD is operating, in particular with regard to staffing issues and student-teacher ratio. These constraints are bringing challenges and difficult choices to the UAD daily operations and for planning its future. Some of the problems that the UAD encounters are due to financial and human resources restrictions. Some of them are linked to the general economic crisis. An example of this is the fact that the universities cannot make decisions regarding staffing issues by themselves. At the same time, no new positions for academic staff are provided to the universities. The ministry of education decides the number of state-funded students for all the study programmes within a university, and the university Senate distributes the state-funded places to the study programmes, based on its own methodology (interest of students for that particular programme; quality assurance standards etc.). The university can then decide for the number of fee-paying places per study programme, within the limit established by ARACIS at the last evaluation. The combination of these factors impacts on the student/staff ratio and on the quality of teaching; but it also has an impact on the possibilities of promoting academic staff, since promotion is done through pleas for new positions, which is a legal and not financial constraint. The evaluation team was informed about a recent change in the law, which on the one hand prolongs the retirement age of academic staff and on the other hand allows for retired professors to return to their

positions. This change compensates, to some extent, the shortage in academic staff due to the blockage of new positions. The positive effects are stronger in an art university like the UAD, since the return of retired professors will help increase the low number of professors who fulfil the requirements that allow them to supervise a PhD (see below section 4).

For the evaluation team, such constraints have a negative impact on the overall performance of a university. The evaluation team considers necessary either the removal of these restrictions or the smoothening of their impact through compensation measures. In this regard, the evaluation team suggests the development of a motivation policy for the academic staff, which should include a merit-based promotion procedure that will not depend on existing resources, i.e. on the existence of vacant places. This measure should of course offer a serious incentive to the academic staff.

3. Teaching and learning

3.1 Teaching and learning

One of the central issues raised both in the SER and in many of our meetings was the commitment of the UAD to implement a student-centred learning approach in teaching and learning. For the evaluation team it was quite interesting and challenging to elaborate in depth on this issue. The evaluation team is not sure to what extent the concept of student-centred learning is clearly understood and perceived in Romania and to what extent it is a constituent part of the current reform. In the background paper titled "Overview of the higher education system in Romania" (p. 14), the term "student-centred learning" is given the following content: *"Students are considered partners in the higher education institutions and equal members of the academic community. Their rights, freedoms and obligations will be contained in a Code of students' rights and responsibilities that will be proposed by the national students' associations and adopted by the Ministry of Education, by means of a Ministerial Decision. The students associations will publicly present an annual report regarding the implementation of the code."* Similarly, the Romanian law for higher education contains a Chapter X under the heading "Promoting the university focused on student", the first article of which (article 199) states that *"The students are regarded as partners of the HEIs and members of equal standing of the academic community."* Undoubtedly, these statements constitute a significant principle for the Romanian higher education system, which is already applied accordingly in the collegial governance structures and procedures; nevertheless, these statements do not correspond to the concept of "student-centred learning".

Contrary to the above quotes, we found much clearer approaches to the concept of student-centred learning in the UAD. The SER (p. 11-15) deals in considerable details and clarity with the issue of teaching and learning, placing emphasis, on the one hand, on the philosophy and the objectives of the curriculum in the various study programmes and, on the other hand, on the processes for the continuous development and restructuring of the curricula. Following the same philosophy, the SER presents a much clearer perception of the student-centred learning compared to the one presented either in the law or in the abovementioned background paper:

"It is essential to note here that all professors within UAD have special training in the field of teaching at academic level and/or meet in discussion groups to discuss the methodology of teaching. They also hold, beside training / teaching skills, abilities for counselling, monitoring and facilitating the learning process. The main responsibility of the professor is to design the learning methods and environments which focus on the student, with less emphasis on the traditional task to only convey information. The relationship between the student and the

professor is a partnership, as part of which both parties have their responsibility regarding the teaching-learning process' outcomes.

A student-centred teaching-learning process can be attained only by the full commitment of the academic and administrative staff. Consequently, the UAD professors constantly assist the students with advice and counselling during classes or scheduled activities, but also on other unscheduled occasions, whenever necessary. The professors, together with the general secretariat office and with the faculties' secretariat offices are systematically involved in the updating of all the information intended for the students by publicly displaying them or by informing the student groups or individual students."

Apart from the much clearer perception of student-centred learning, the above paragraphs also present an outline of the profile of the academic staff of the UAD which is required in order to cope with the needs and challenges of student-centred learning. The evaluation team is fully aware that genuine implementation of student-centred learning requires changing the attitudes of the academic staff and stimulating them in order to apply the new approach, but it also requires changing the students' attitudes too. The evaluation team understands that art higher education by its nature fits the concept of student-centred learning better and that changing attitudes is much easier in this domain. However, the continuous improvement of academic staff's capacities to that aim is a necessity. In this regard, the evaluation team recommends further improvement of the procedures aiming to increase the teaching and pedagogical competences of the academic staff and for their enrichment with new approaches related to the concept of "student-centred learning".

Strongly connected with the student-centred learning approach is educational philosophy of the UAD that has to do with the concept of educative research or education for artistic research. We perceive it as a twofold approach aiming, on the one hand, for the creation of the appropriate culture of artistic research within the educational programmes and for the consequent development of an artistic research attitude by the students, and on the other hand for the enhancement of the interaction between artistic research and society. The evaluation team strongly appreciates this educational approach and recommends that the UAD make it even broader in order to facilitate the communication of artistic research and artistic creation inside and outside the university.

During all its meetings at the UAD, and especially during its visits to the two faculties, the evaluation team appreciated the dedicated and focused efforts from all actors in providing a good learning environment for the students and the results achieved by the UAD in this respect. More precisely, we had the opportunity to realise that the academic staff are professional and highly committed to their role in supporting students in their learning process and we appreciated the assessment of the students' achievement that is organised in a transparent and collegiate way.

Finally, regarding teaching and learning, the evaluation team would like to raise the issue of the generic competences and skills of the students of the UAD. We realise of course that the quality of the artistic learning outcomes are of major importance; however, the generic skills will improve the qualities and widen the horizons of the students in their professional career both in the public and private sectors. For that reason, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD introduce courses focused on generic skills development (communication, presentation, analytical and critical thinking etc.) in order to enhance the employability of graduates. Furthermore, the evaluation team also recommends that the UAD continue to monitor graduates in their professional career by strengthening the links with its alumni with the aim of improving the relevance of curricula to the changing professional reality. The UAD should also strengthen its links with its external partners with the same aim in mind.

3.2   Students

The evaluation team had many fruitful meetings with students, at both faculty and institutional level. The impression of the evaluation team is that the students are indeed satisfied with their studies, their teachers, the university as a whole, and their employment opportunities. They are also satisfied with the conditions of their student life and with the level of their involvement and participation in university governance. In parallel, they had strong views on how to improve their studies and the overall operation of their university.

The evaluation team appreciated the work done by the UAD Student Association in various directions. The association aims to improve communication and information between the university and the students, its activity being socially-sensitive and student-centred. As a proof of the commitment of students regarding their participation in university governance, it is worthwhile to note here the training process of student representatives in the governance bodies at institutional or faculty level which is organised by the association in a three-day annual camp with counsellors-trainers and with the participation of the rector and the president of the senate.

Finally, our feeling is that we met really mature and committed students in the UAD. The UAD is a student-friendly university and according to the information collected during our visits, Cluj-Napoca is in general a student-friendly university town. The main recommendation that the evaluation team would propose is that the students should continue to be as active as possible in all functions of the UAD.

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IEP EUA-Institutional Evaluation Programme | EUA European University Association

3.3   Academic staff

The complex role and tasks of the academic staff in an art university, and especially in a student-centred learning environment, have already been mentioned in section 3.1 in this report. To fulfil this role and to accomplish these tasks becomes even harder under the constraints imposed by the current economic crisis as they have been described earlier in this report in the subsection dealing with autonomy and constraints.

The evaluation team had the opportunity to realise the dedication and commitment of the academic staff of the UAD. Under the current economic crisis, academic staff shortages may become harmful for the quality of teaching and learning, and it is only the commitment of the academic staff that prevents such a situation arising in the UAD. In this regard, *the evaluation team refers to its recommendation for the development of a motivation policy for the academic staff including a merit-based promotion procedure that will not depend on the existence of vacant places.*

Finally, the evaluation team, taking into consideration the complex role of the academic staff in an art university, refers to its recommendation made earlier in the subsection 3.1 and extends it to the need for developing lifelong learning activities in order to update and continuously improve the competences of academic staff in both teaching and research.

4.   Research

The issue of research activity in an art university like the UAD was at the top of the agenda in all discussions and meetings of the evaluation team. The specificity of research in the domain of arts was analysed in the SER (p. 16-19), where it was also mentioned that this issue causes *"a still on-going debate in the framework of higher education systems in all European countries"*. A thorough analysis of the concepts of artistic research and artistic creation was given in a document titled "The policy and development strategy of the council for university doctoral studies (CSUD) of the UAD" which was prepared by the director of the CSUD, Prof. Aurel Codoban, and presented during our meeting with key persons in charge of research and doctoral studies.

Concerning the specificity or research activity in art universities, it is worthwhile noting that the Romanian law for higher education includes a specific chapter (chapter VII) referring to higher artistic and sports education. The main provisions of this chapter are as follows:
  - *"Higher arts or sports education process is carried out through teaching activities and creative and performance practice"* (article 180)
  - *"The research through artistic creation, design and sports performance is carried out individually or collectively, in design centres, laboratories, art workshops, music studios, theatre and film production units, spaces dedicated to sports"* (article 185)
  - *"The quality assessment and the classification of the arts and sports universities take in consideration the specific artistic creation and sports performance criteria"* (article 186)

Furthermore, the same chapter of the law stipulates in article 181 that arts universities may organise study programmes of all three cycles, providing two types of PhDs, namely the scientific PhD and the professional PhD, while in article 184 it is provided that for the higher artistic education the scientific or professional PhD is a prerequisite for the academic teaching career.

For the Romanian law for higher education the issues of artistic research and professional PhDs are interrelated with regards to higher artistic education. For that reason, we handle both issues under the section of Research in our report. But before proceeding to further analysis, we consider it necessary to refer also to the distinction between professional and scientific PhDs, as it appears in article 158, clause 6 of the Romanian law for higher education:
"PhD programmes are of two types:
a) scientific PhD, which has as final result the generation of original scientific knowledge, relevant at international level, based on scientific methods, organized only for daily attendance. The scientific PhD is an essential condition for a carrier as a researcher or professor in the higher education system;

b) professional PhD, in arts and sports, which has as final result the generation of original scientific knowledge based on scientific methods and systematic reflection, on artistic creation or on Sports performance at national and international high level and which may represent a basis for the professional career in higher education and research in arts and sports."

The evaluation team appreciated the important role of research as it appears in the mission of the UAD leading to new forms of artistic creation and improvement of social and economic environment through research. As mentioned earlier in this report, the research issue was at the centre of our discussions at the UAD. Our concern was to create a clear view of the research approach in an artistic university considering its specificities. This concern of the evaluation team should be seen in relation to our view that these specificities should also be understood by the political authorities in Romania and also by the wider higher education community and by the wider public.

At the end of the day, we can say that we do have a much clearer view than what we had in the beginning of the evaluation process; and we have to praise the people of the UAD for their efforts to make us aware. The analyses on the different forms of artistic research ("research about art", "research for art" and "research through art"), considering also the concept of the "non-verbal language" of research, offer excellent tools for the understanding of the concept of artistic research. The main recommendation that could be made on this issue by the evaluation team is that the UAD further clarifies the related terminology and conceptualisation in order to reach consistency in all its documents and to foster perception among academic staff.

The evaluation team observed a strong commitment in the UAD to facilitate research in all its dimensions. However, substantial constraints appear in the transformation of this commitment into action. A first constraint has to do with the teaching overload of the academic staff in order to meet the needs of "student-centred learning", which does not leave enough room for research activities. As it seems that no new positions for academic staff are to be expected in the near future, the main recommendation that the evaluation team could make in this regard is that the leadership of the UAD at all levels should ensure a more effective balance between research and teaching obligations of the academic staff.

A second constraint has to do with lack of resources provided for artistic research by the state structures in Romanian. In the SWOT analysis of the UAD (SER, p. 28), the following threat is stated: *"Very limited access for the artists-professors to research funds, given the current CNCS (National Council for Scientific Research) standards for applying for research funds within the national research programs"*. In our meeting with the administration council we had the opportunity to verify the view that research funding by the state structures is not possible, since there are no criteria for funding fit to artistic research/creation. An extended

analysis on this issue appears in the SER (p. 16-18), stating that the 2011 law has removed the pre-existing "equivalence" system which assumed that *"the artistic production, creation itself includes, in order to produce value, a significant research component"*.

Insufficient research funding is a real problem according to the evaluation team. Its first recommendation in this regard should be addressed to the respective bodies involved in research funding in Romania which should take into consideration the specificity of artistic creation and research while proposing new standards for research, affecting both funding and assessment. In parallel, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD fosters its contacts with other universities of art in Romania in order to strengthen lobbying power for recognition of artistic research and its role for society and in order to achieve reconsiderations of standards for research funding.

Furthermore, and given the economic conditions in Romania, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD, in order to facilitate research activities, looks for new opportunities to attract money for artistic research from the European Union and from other international resources. In this regard, the UAD should, on the one hand, improve its international collaborations and, on the other hand, clarify and enhance its research profile considering its comparative advantages in research. In parallel, and in order to be successful in these efforts, the UAD needs to ensure more technical support for preparing competitive proposals for research funding, considering the establishment of a specific administrative unit to that aim.

The development of third cycle programmes in a university is a prerequisite for enhancing its research activity and performance. The UAD operates a PhD programme in the context of its doctoral school. However, a serious constraint for the development of PhDs in the UAD is the low number of professors who have the qualifications required by the law that allow them to supervise PhDs. The evaluation team noted that 18 out of the 20 PhDs that were finalised during the year 2012 were supervised by only three professors of the UAD, who are at the same time overloaded with management duties (rector, president of the senate and director of the doctoral school). Under these conditions, the further development of PhD programmes and, accordingly, the further enhancement of research are practically impossible to attain. The evaluation team considers this situation problematic. In the case where Romanian law does not offer any other possibilities (as for example those provided to retired professors to return back to their positions), the evaluation team would recommend that the UAD, in order to cope with this situation, establishes incentives and offers opportunities for academic staff to reach the required formal qualifications in order to become a PhD supervisor.

At the end of the section for research, the evaluation team would also like to elaborate on the issue of the professional PhD. According to the Romanian law, the professional PhD is

provided only for the domains of arts and sports. It may have as a final result the generation of original scientific knowledge based on scientific methods, similar to the scientific PhD, but it also may have as a final result the generation of original scientific knowledge based on systematic reflection or on artistic creation or on sports performance, which is not the case for the scientific PhD.

The conceptualisation of the distinctions between the two types of PhDs is rather vague in the law. This lack of clarity was obvious in all our meetings in the UAD. This has led the people of the UAD to the decision to consider their PhD as scientific and not professional. This is something that has also been accepted by the ministry of education. The evaluation team had the opportunity to go through the whole list of the titles of all PhD theses finalised in the four-year period 2009-2012 and realised that the large majority of these theses could be considered as the outcome of scientific research. Nevertheless, and irrespective of our previous judgement, the evaluation team would like to quote a paragraph of the earlier mentioned document "The policy and development strategy of the council for university doctoral studies (CSUD) of the UAD", stating the following: *"The concept of 'professional doctorate' that installs a somewhat ambiguous hierarchy of research remains unclear, because it creates the appearance of lower doctorate professional positions (in arts and sports) than scientific. To be clear: from the discussions it results that professional doctorate is awarded for outstanding creations in the activity without further conditioning rigorous and thorough research. Professional doctorate seems to lie somewhere between the honoris causa and scientific doctorate!"* The evaluation team cannot reach a clear view on the concept of the professional PhD and its differences from the scientific PhD. And in this respect we have to confess that we share the view of the people in the UAD concerning the ambiguity of the two types of PhDs.

5.   Service to society

Establishing strong and close links with society is one of the major aims of any university nowadays, notably because offering services to society is considered the third mission of contemporary universities, combined, of course, with their accountability and public responsibility. In the case of a university like the UAD a significant part of this relationship is directed to the part of the community, which is related directly or indirectly with arts. The commercial art galleries, cultural institutions, pre-university artistic education schools, but also the businesses, including creative industries sector, are the main stakeholders or external partners in the case of the UAD.

Furthermore, we would also like to recall the societal role of the UAD as it is illustrated in its credo (to help open new horizons to the society through major contributions to the building of contemporary culture) and in its mission (to contribute, through the artistic creation and research conducted by its members, to the development of the society by the satisfaction of the requirements of the community, but also by their anticipation and influence). These references show clearly the sensitivity of the UAD regarding its societal role in a more general sense.

The evaluation team noted the good links between the UAD and local external partners. We had the opportunity to verify these good links both in our discussions with the leadership and other members of the university and in our discussion with the local external partners. Nevertheless, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD takes further steps in this direction aiming to maximise opportunities for promoting university activities and enhancing its further development. In this respect, we recommend expanding relations with external partners to provide wider internship possibilities for students and foster communication channels to the professional world. Involvement of external partners to curricula development and to competence building of students (e.g. internships, placements for training) should also be part of these expanded relations, together with invitations of key persons from the professional world to teaching in the university.

A specific part of this collaboration should refer to the applied artistic research, i.e. to the relationship of visual arts and design with the creative industries. We share the view outlined in the SER (p. 16) that "*the perspectives of the development of creative industries, the new environments, technologies and materials are an important challenge for the contribution of arts in shaping the future society*". In this respect, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD takes full advantage of its strengths in applied research in order to build a strong two-way relationship with the creative industries sector at regional and national level irrespective of the current fragility of this sector (which is considered a threat by the UAD, according to the SWOT analysis in the SER, p. 27).

Finally, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD consider the establishment of an advisory body consisting of external partners and alumni, in order to assist the rector in an informal way. This advisory body should ensure continuity and enhance efficiency in the relationships between the UAD and its external partners. The evaluation team is aware that the centre of excellence of the UAD has recently been transformed into an honorific body, which may act as a consultative body on internal issues of the university (education, research). Our recommendation here aims to achieve something different, as it refers to a body which in fact will help the university to establish closer and tighter links with its external environment on an advisory (and thus informal) basis.

6.   Quality culture

The term "quality culture" defines the overall attitude of a university toward the concept of "quality" and thus applies to issues like quality assurance, quality assessment, quality improvement, etc. In the context of the IEP's methodology, quality assurance offers the means through which a university will be in a position to know whether it is doing well and accomplishing its chosen mission and goals. It certainly comes from the necessity of going beyond data, figures, statistics, quantitative elements and it deals with the qualitative dimension. Quality is a central element in European higher education today. Furthermore, it has also assumed a key role in the Bologna Process, while the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ESG), adopted by the European ministers in Bergen in May 2005, have built a European perspective and a European context for quality assurance in higher education. It is worthwhile noting that every country participating in the Bologna Process is committed to developing its own quality assurance system in compliance with the above ESG.

As a key stakeholder in the European discussions on quality assurance, EUA actively encourages its member universities to implement their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and to develop a quality culture shared among universities throughout Europe. As stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), "consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework". It is a task therefore for every European university to develop its own structures and procedures ensuring genuine quality assurance.

Referring to the case of the UAD, the evaluation team would like first of all to praise its well-organised system of internal quality assurance. The organisation of the quality assurance system of the UAD includes at institutional level the quality assurance department (DAC), the senate commission for quality assurance (CEAC) and the quality management system (QMS), while its details are outlined in the official document "Quality Assurance Policies and Strategies". The DAC is responsible for implementing the quality assurance programmes within the UAD and it coordinates and oversees the overall internal quality assurance procedures. The DAC includes the entire academic and administrative management of the UAD (including, since January 2013, the academic management of the third cycle too). The CEAC is one of the senate commissions and its task is to assess on a yearly basis the activities of the DAC and to prepare a yearly report to the senate also including proposals for improvement of the quality programmes in the UAD. In this respect, the CEAC has an advisory role to the senate for the strategy of the UAD in the field of quality. Finally, the QMS runs throughout the overall operation of the university on the basis of the ISO 9001 certification. The implementation of a QMS in all Romanian universities was requested by ARACIS.

However, the choice of the ISO 9001 system was done by the UAD. The team was told that this was partially because all universities of Cluj-Napoca used this approach and partially because it was recommended by the Ministry of Finance in order to ensure transparency in spending through clear processes.

The implementation of the quality assurance programmes in the UAD is monitored through the annual "operational framework" which is elaborated by the DAC and which also aims at the development and improvement of quality standards. This document comprises all the performance criteria, standards and indicators from the fields specified in the Methodology ARACIS, following in general the European Standards and Guidelines.

The evaluation team is aware that the UAD has undergone many external evaluations of various types, at various levels and for various reasons in the past few years. We mention them below:

a) Evaluation by ARACIS (2008), resulting in the recognition of the UAD as "university with a high degree of confidence"
b) Accreditation leading to the ISO 9001 certification for the quality management system (2009 with re-accreditation in 2012)
c) Classification in the category of universities of education and scientific and artistic research (2011)
d) Accreditation of all study programmes by ARACIS (since 2007-2008)
e) Ranking of study programmes (2011): Programmes in the domain of visual arts in category A
f) Participation in one of the first European-level programmes (the "Interartes" thematic network) that included assessments made by international experts on the operation of the quality assurance mechanisms at several European institutions in the field of arts (2006)

The evaluation team understands that the UAD has suffered — and still suffers — from an evaluation overload. The reasons are understandable, as they have to do with the need to ensure and improve the quality of the Romanian higher education system. However, the evaluation team also knows that evaluation overload does not necessarily lead to improvement in quality and does not necessarily help in building a quality culture.

The evaluation team paid specific attention to the consistency of the internal quality assurance system of the UAD with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), specifically with part 1. The implementation of the ESG at the UAD was not checked using a "checklist approach" but through an "evidence-based approach", i.e. through an approach based on evidence derived from all related documents (SER, strategic plan, quality documents) and from the findings during our meetings. Following this approach, the evaluation team had the

opportunity to realise that the internal quality assurance structures and procedures of the UAD follow, to a satisfactory extent, the ESG. This view of the evaluation team is principally based on the following evidence:

- The official document "Quality Assurance Policies and Strategies" provides for all issues related to the ESG.
- The organisation of the quality assurance system of the UAD includes at institutional level the quality assurance department (DAC), the senate commission for quality assurance (CEAC) and the quality management system (QMS).
- The DAC elaborates the "operational framework" for monitoring, development and continuous improvement of quality standards. This document comprises all the performance criteria, standards and indicators from the fields specified in the Methodology ARACIS. It is a document, which offers an image of the indicators such as: fulfilled; partially fulfilled; in progress of fulfilment; unfulfilled (Quality assurance policies and strategies, p. 3).
- Each faculty sets its own quality management strategies and goals (SER, p. 22).
- Involvement of students is ensured, on the one hand, through the participation of one student representative in the DAC and two student representatives in the CEAC and, on the other hand, through the questionnaires filled by the students for the assessment of courses and teaching staff, which seem to operate in a satisfactory way.
- The DAC has its own software system for the purpose of collecting, processing and analysing the information necessary for the fulfilment of its objectives. The information that are of interest to the public (regarding the study programmes, diplomas, professional qualifications, etc.) is presented on the website UAD (DAC regulation, p. 2).

The evaluation team praises the UAD for its internal quality assurance system and for its consistency in following the ESG. We have only two issues to raise regarding quality assurance in the UAD. The first issue has to do with the ISO system. The evaluation team does not mean to undermine its value. Nevertheless, we want to point out the principal difference between ISO and internal quality assurance; the ISO 9001 is in fact a bureaucratic system that can only ensure a minimum level of quality, while the internal quality assurance processes aim to raise quality above the minimum and to ensure continuous quality improvement.

The second issue has to do with the roles of the two main actors involved in the quality assurance processes in the UAD, namely the DAC (which represents the acting mechanism) and the CEAC (which represents the controlling mechanism). During our joint meeting with them we understood that the two mechanisms operate on a "consensus" basis. In our view, this is a false operation of the "act-control" dipole. Between the acting mechanism (DAC) and the controlling mechanism (CEAC) there is another body, the senate. This is where the report of the control is addressed and this where a new quality strategy will be elaborated if necessary. Therefore, it is not an issue of consensus between the acting and the controlling

mechanisms; it is an issue of genuine, effective and creative control. <u>In this regard, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD reconsiders and clarifies the different roles of all actors involved in the quality assurance processes, especially in relation to the respective roles of the quality assurance department and the senate commission for quality assurance, in order to ensure a systematic and coherent approach throughout the university and genuine implementation of the different roles.</u>

As mentioned earlier, quality culture is not about standards, rankings, or classifications; it is about attitudes, mentalities, and values. Quality culture is not expected to be imposed or regulated or monitored in a top-down approach. Quality culture should be built in a bottom-up approach and then spread within the whole higher education community and affect all functions of the university. However, the involvement of each individual in this bottom-up procedure requires inspiration which in fact acts as stimulation. And conveying this inspiration is a very important role and task for the leadership of the university at all levels.

7.   Internationalisation

An internationalisation strategy may be based on the relationships established by a university with international partners. This relationship may be built at the institutional level (e.g. inter-university relationships, relations with international organisations, partnership in international networks and consortia), at the level of the faculties (e.g. joint or dual study programmes and degrees), at the level of research units/activities (e.g. participation in international research projects and financing by international resources) or at the level of individuals (e.g. mobility exchanges of students and staff, attractiveness of international students and staff, involvement of students and staff in international events and activities).

Therefore, an important part of the internationalisation strategy of a university will be of course to develop the appropriate conditions that will help to establish and/or further improve the above relationships. However, it should also be taken into account that the above relationships will be built on and will be facilitated and further improved by the international visibility of the university, by the brand name that the university has internationally, by its reputation, and by the way in which it promotes its qualities internationally. And this should be considered a constituent part of an internationalisation strategy.

The evaluation team praises the internationalisation efforts of the UAD. We had the opportunity to realise that internationalisation is high on the strategic agenda of the UAD and that the awareness of the need for further internationalisation is strong within the university. In this regard, and in view of the above analysis, the evaluation team considers it extremely important for the UAD to develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy that will cover all the abovementioned dimensions, taking advantage of all opportunities that the existing legislation in Romania allows for. In the context of this strategy, we recommend that the UAD make even greater efforts to improve its international visibility promoting its brand name and its qualities internationally.

The evaluation team was informed that the student Erasmus mobility in the UAD is among the highest in Romania compared to the student population of the university. However we recognise challenges faced by the university in increasing international mobility opportunities for both students and staff and in attracting international students. The team recommends, therefore, that the UAD, on the one hand keeps on improving its performance regarding outgoing mobility students and staff, and on the other hand improves its attractiveness for foreign students through inclusion of courses taught in foreign languages and by emphasising its students-friendly environment and reasonable living costs in its external communication.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Capacity for change

Alongside quality assurance issues, the Institutional Evaluation Programme focuses on the capacity for change. The reason for this is a widespread conviction that European HEIs are exposed to increasing demands from society and the labour market and in many countries they are also exposed to growing competition from other institutions of higher education. Especially with regards to European universities, the new landscape connected to the emerging European Higher Education Area and the principles of the Bologna Process is one more reason and necessity for change.

If the universities do not seize the initiative themselves and show their capacity for improving, adapting, changing and showing adaptability to radically new conditions in an era of mass higher education, then there may be risks that even the important core academic values, which we undoubtedly all want to preserve, might be in jeopardy.

The capacity for change firstly requires the identification of all the factors requiring change, as well as of the features and the content of the change needed. Secondly, it requires each university to determine its own mission in conjunction with the changes needed and to set its priorities. Thirdly, it requires determining the strengths and weaknesses of each university with respect to its own identity and characteristics and to the existing external conditions. Finally, it requires an efficient mechanism to assess continually the course of each institution towards its objectives, towards the changes required.

Capacity for change presupposes eagerness for change and self-knowledge. But above all, capacity for change requires inspiration. It requires inspired, motivated and determined people. It is extremely important to realise that elements of strategic planning do not themselves change universities. Changes in institutions have to be driven by people: staff and students, with an inspired leadership making sure that the actions in the action plans are underway and that the milestones are achieved.

Talking about the UAD, we can say that it is a university in the middle of change. The specific situation of Romania and of Romanian higher education, together with the current trends in European higher education and in conjunction with the current economic crisis, form a rapidly changing and challenging landscape for the UAD, and for any Romanian university. Additionally, the UAD has to also meet the challenges that all art universities face in Romania and elsewhere. Therefore UAD has to adapt its strategy to this new landscape, in order to fulfil its assumed mission. The evaluation team is aware of the strategic plan 2013-2016 of the

university and is also aware of the analysis that the UAD has already done in its SWOT analysis regarding its strengths and its weaknesses together with the opportunities and the threats deriving from the new landscape. In this respect, the evaluation team has the certainty that the UAD has the qualities, the potential and the means to be successful in the next stages of development by following innovative strategies helping to cope with the complex environment it is operating in.

We conclude by mentioning some of the qualities that we consider indispensable in order to ensure the capacity of the UAD for change:
- A clear mission, inspired vision and ambitious but realistic objectives
- Effective strategic management
- Action plans and milestones through performance indicators
- Effective, efficient and inspiring leadership
- Quality culture
- Committed staff and students
- Close and strong links with society at large and with its external partners based on mutual trust and effective interaction

Many of these qualities characterise already, to a higher or lower degree, the UAD, as we have already outlined throughout our present report. Other qualities however have to be further improved. In this respect, <u>our main recommendation would be that the UAD maintains and further improves these qualities in order to strengthen its capacity for change, reinforcing internal trust and ownership for the mission and strategic developments.</u>

8.2   Conclusions

The UAD has a history of almost 90 years of existence. During this history, it has successfully undergone many changes, especially during the last years, demonstrating its capacity to adapt to changing conditions. Furthermore, this history ensures a solid position within the Romanian higher education system for the UAD, especially within the area of arts, as well as within the local community. Today, the UAD faces the challenge of a new era in Romanian higher education, which of course should be considered in conjunction with the current developments in the European Higher Education Area and take due account of the constraints resulting from the economic crisis.

The context in which the current evaluation took place has been described earlier in this report. In this regard, our evaluation aims to find out, understand and assess the qualities of the UAD and its capacity to meet successfully the challenges of the future. These challenges should be considered as opportunities for the UAD. On the one hand, they offer a clear perspective for the future and, on the other hand, they operate as driving forces motivating and stimulating all the actors within the university.

We had the opportunity to recognise many of these qualities. Furthermore, we had the opportunity to see a university with a high level of self-knowledge, as demonstrated by the SER and the SWOT analysis included there, and with clear vision for the future, as laid out in its strategic plan, which we consider a significant starting point for the future steps of the UAD. From the evaluation team's viewpoint, the UAD has much strength to rely on in order to face its challenging future. And our analysis has convinced us that the UAD is heading in the right direction for its future.

It is in that context that the evaluation team tried to approach the work done by the UAD. Our recommendations are intended to be our own contribution to the process of change and to support UAD in making the most of the opportunities open to it and cope with the threats scattered along its route to the future. At the same time, our report aspires to function as an inspiration for the UAD as a whole, but more specifically for all those people, leadership, students and staff, who are concerned by its future. We hope that the work done by our evaluation team, including the present report, offers a real contribution to UAD's future steps. We also hope that the UAD will seize the opportunity to realise and demonstrate its great potential.

8.3   Summary of recommendations

In this section of the report we summarise the main recommendations, as they have appeared underlined in the respective sections of the text.

Section 1   Introduction

1.2   The UAD's profile

1.   The evaluation team recommends that the UAD further foster its collaboration with other universities in Cluj-Napoca in order to improve the attractiveness of the higher education environment of the region by strengthening its comparative advantages, in order to maximise the offerings of the higher education system to the region and in order to maximise the benefits of the partnerships.

Section 2   Governance and institutional decision-making

2.1   The philosophy of the UAD: Norms and values/Vision - mission - strategic goals

2.   The evaluation team recommends a proactive strategic planning, transformed into cost-estimated actions that should be prioritised and put into a time schedule irrespective of the annual budget to the UAD. This action plan should be associated with properly quantified key performance indicators defined in advance also in a proactive manner.

3.   The evaluation team recommends that the task to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the strategic goals and the key performance indicators should be assigned to a specific body attached directly to the rector or to one of the vice-rectors. This body should also have the task to assess the validity of the strategic goals and the respective key performance indicators and reconsider them in all cases where the goals and the key performance indicators could not be achieved.

4.   The evaluation team fully supports the efforts of the UAD to improving collaboration with other arts universities and faculties in order to cope with the threat of potential marginalisation of the arts universities by the relevant ministry and the associated bodies and considers necessary for all involved authorities and actors to consider the importance of art education and research at the level of higher education taking also due account of their specificities.

2.2   Governance and institutional decision-making

Autonomy and constraints

5.   The evaluation team has noticed considerable constraints in the legal and financial environment in which the UAD is operating in restricting its autonomy in practice. The evaluation team considers necessary either the removal of these restrictions or the smoothening of their impact through compensation measures. In this regard, the evaluation team suggests the development of a motivation policy for the academic staff, which should include a merit-based promotion procedure that will not depend on existing resources, i.e. on the existence of vacant places. This measure should of course offer a serious incentive to the academic staff.

Section 3   Teaching and learning

3.1   Teaching and learning

6.   The evaluation team recommends further improvement of the procedures aiming to increase the teaching and pedagogical competences of the academic staff and for their enrichment with new approaches related to the concept of "student-centred learning".

7.   The evaluation team strongly appreciates the educational approach of the UAD regarding the concept of educative research or education for artistic research and recommends that the UAD make it even broader in order to facilitate the communication of artistic research and artistic creation inside and outside the university.

8.   The evaluation team recommends that the UAD introduce courses to develop generic skills (communication, presentation, analytical and critical thinking etc.) in order to enhance the employability of graduates. Furthermore, the evaluation team recommends also that the UAD continue monitoring graduates in their professional career, by strengthening the links with its alumni with the aim to improve the relevance of curricula to the changing professional reality. Within this context and with the same aim, the UAD should also strengthen its links with its external partners.

3.2   Students

9.   The main recommendation of the evaluation team is that the students should continue to be as active as possible in all functions of the UAD.

3.3   Academic staff

10.   The evaluation team refers to its recommendation N°5 regarding the development of a motivation policy for academic staff including a merit-based promotion procedure that will not depend on the existence of vacant places.

11.   Finally, the evaluation team, taking into consideration the complex role of the academic staff in an art university, refers to recommendation N° 6 and extends it to the need for developing lifelong learning activities in order to update and continuously improve the competences of academic staff in both teaching and research.

Section 4 Research

12.   The evaluation team recommends that the UAD clarifies further the related terminology and conceptualisation of the different forms of artistic research in order to reach consistency in all its documents and to foster perception among academic staff.

13.   Taking due consideration of the teaching overload of the UAD academic staff in order to meet the needs of "student-centred learning" due to hiring restrictions, the evaluation team recommends that the leadership of the UAD at all levels should ensure a more effective balance between research and teaching obligations of the academic staff.

14. The evaluation team recommends that the respective bodies involved in research funding in Romania should take into consideration the specificity of artistic creation and research while proposing new standards for research, affecting both funding and assessment. In parallel, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD fosters its contacts with other universities of art in Romania in order to ensure better recognition of artistic research and its role for society and in order to achieve reconsiderations of standards for research funding.

15. Given the economic conditions in Romania, the evaluation team recommends that the UAD, in order to facilitate research activities, looks for new opportunities to attract money for artistic research from the European Union and from other international resources. To this end, the UAD should improve its international collaborations, and clarify and enhance its research profile considering its comparative advantages in research. In parallel, and in order to be successful in these efforts, the UAD needs to ensure more technical support for preparing competitive proposals for research funding, considering the establishment of a specific administrative unit to that aim.

16. In case the Romanian law does not offer any other possibilities (for example those provided to retired professors to return to work), the evaluation team would recommend that the UAD, in order to cope with this situation, establishes incentives and offers opportunities for academic staff to reach the required formal qualifications in order to become a PhD supervisor.

Section 5 Service to society

17. The evaluation team recommends that the UAD takes further steps in establishing good links with local external partners aiming to maximise opportunities for promoting university activities and enhancing its further development. In this respect, the evaluation team recommends expanding relations with external partners to provide wider internship possibilities for students and foster communication channels to the professional world. Involvement of external partners to curricula development and to competence building of students (e.g. internships, placements for training) should also be part of these expanded relations, together with invitations of key persons from the professional world to teaching in the university.

18. The evaluation team recommends that the UAD take full advantage of its strengths in applied research in order to build a strong two-way relationship with creative industries sector at regional and national level irrespective of the current fragility of this sector.

19. The evaluation team recommends that the UAD consider the establishment of an advisory body consisting of external partners and alumni, in order to assist the rector in an

informal way. This advisory body should ensure continuity and enhance efficiency in the relationships between the UAD and its external partners. The evaluation team is aware that the centre of excellence of the UAD has recently been transformed to an honorific body, which may act as a consultative body on internal issues of the university (education, research). The present recommendation of the evaluation team aims for something different, as it refers to a body which in fact will help the university to establish closer and tighter links with its external environment on an advisory (and thus informal) basis.

Section 6   Quality culture

20.   The evaluation team recommends that the UAD reconsiders and clarifies the different roles of all actors involved in the quality assurance processes, especially in relation to the roles of the quality assurance department and the senate commission for quality assurance, in order to ensure systematic and coherent approach throughout university and genuine implementation of the different roles.

Section 7   Internationalisation

21.   The evaluation team considers it extremely important for the UAD to develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy that will cover all the abovementioned dimensions, taking advantage of all opportunities that the existing legislation in Romania allows for. In the context of this strategy, it is recommended that the UAD make even greater efforts to improve its international visibility promoting its brand name and its qualities internationally.

22.   The evaluation team recommends that the UAD, on the one hand keeps on improving its performance regarding outgoing mobility students and staff, and on the other hand improves its attractiveness for foreign students through inclusion of courses taught in foreign languages and by emphasising the students-friendly environment and the reasonable living costs in its external communication.

Section 8   Capacity for institutional change

23.   The following are qualities that the evaluation team considers indispensable in order to ensure the capacity of the UAD for change:
- A clear mission, inspired vision and ambitious but realistic objectives
- Effective strategic management
- Action plans and milestones through performance indicators
- Effective, efficient and inspiring leadership
- Quality culture

- Committed staff and students
- Close and strong links with society at large and with its external partners based on mutual trust and effective interaction

Many of these qualities characterise already, to a higher or lower degree, the UAD. Other qualities however have to be further improved. In this respect, the recommendation of the evaluation team on this point would be that the UAD maintains and further improves these qualities in order to strengthen its capacity for change, reinforcing internal trust and ownership for the mission and strategic developments.