Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programme

- ### "Romanian and French Language and Literature" (B.Ed.)

offered by Cahul State University (Republic of Moldova)

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 62nd meeting on 22nd/23rd of February 2016, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programme **"Romanian and French Language and Literature" (Bachelor of Education)** offered by **Cahul State University (Moldova)** is accredited according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

   The accreditation is **conditional**.

2. The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be processed within a time period of nine months.

3. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30th of November 2016.**

4. The accreditation is given for the period of **five years** and is valid until **30th of September 2021**.

Conditions:

1. The transparency of the official documents must be improved:

   a. The documentation must be clear about the focus on teacher education, e.g. in the Diploma Supplement.

   b. The faculty must apply the European model to describe competences of translation, e.g. in the module descriptions.

   c. The entrance level and the target level for French at programme level must be defined clearly, e.g. by referring to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR), e.g. in the Diploma Supplement.

   d. The language of instruction for each subject must be defined in the module descriptions.

   e. It must be described in the module descriptions in which modules research methods are taught.

   f. The learning outcomes must be described in a transparent manner in the module descriptions.

2. The connection between theory and language teaching practice must be strengthened. The faculty must hand in a concept in which the interrelation between the different disciplines in

the programme (linguistics, practical language learning, and pedagogy/didactics) in order to develop skills for future language teachers is described.

3. The faculty must apply the Lisbon-Convention in order to recognise credit points gained at universities abroad on the base of competencies.

4. The faculty must develop a concept on how the study programme is subject to quality assurance:

   a. The concept must describe a system for data collection on the progression of the students, on their workload as well as on the career development of the graduates.

   b. The concept must describe how the data and the evaluation results are used for the development of the study programme.

   c. The faculty must show evidence for the working of the quality assurance system with respect to the study programme.

   d. The concept must show that students are included on a regular basis and that students also know about the results of quality assurance.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. The faculty should strengthen its efforts towards internationalisation. Particularly, more mobility options and more courses in English should be provided.

2. The curriculum should be updated in particular with respect to linguistics. Contemporary approaches to linguistics such as functional and generative linguistics, applied linguistics (with a special focus on second language acquisition), corpus linguistics, and sociolinguistics should be included and made more visible in the module descriptions.

3. It is recommended to use more computer-based technology, especially in French phonetics classes, and to accordingly improve the ICT-equipment of the laboratories.

4. More alternative assessment methods should be included in the study programme. The students should also get more individual feedback on their performance and their progress.

5. The socio-cultural activities should be better promoted to the students.

6. The students should be encouraged to use international research literature and international databases. They should also be more encouraged to use ICT.

7. The number of teaching staff in French language and literature should be increased.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Accreditation Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

Experts' Report

on the study programme

- **"Romanian and French Language and Literature" (B.Ed.)**

offered by Cahul State University (Republic of Moldova)

Visit to the University: 10th/11th of November 2015

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. Christoph Gabriel	Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Institute of Romance Studies
Prof. Dr. Titela Vilceanu	University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Theory and Practice of Translation
Prof. Dr. Gülşen Musayeva Vefali	Eastern Mediterranean University, Education Faculty, English Language Department
Ana Maria Nisioiu	Qualifications expert at the Romanian National Qualifications Authority, Bucharest (representative from the professional field)
Karolina Pietkiewicz	University of Warsaw, Translation and Interpreting (Major) and Didactics of Foreign Languages (Minor) (Student representative)

Coordinators:

Ronny Heintze / Dr. Katarina Löbel	AQAS e. V., Cologne, Germany

1. Introduction

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature" offered by Cahul State University in Cahul, Moldova. The review is based on the criteria that where developed jointly as part of a TEMPUS project under participation of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova. They are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and presented to the Bologna Follow-Up group in 2005.

The University produced a Self Evaluation Report (SER). The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission on 18./19.05.2015. The Accreditation Commission nominated the before mentioned expert panel and the University did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

After a review of the SER, on the 10th and 11th of November 2015 a site visit to the University took place. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders and consulted additional documentation and student work. The visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings by the group of experts to the University representatives.

2. General Information

Cahul State University "Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu" is a public institution founded on 7th of June 1999 having the aim to prepare and provide southern Moldova localities with highly qualified staff. The University has three faculties: Faculty of Philology and History; Faculty of Law and Public Administration and Faculty of Economics, Computer Science and Mathematics. The total teaching staff members of the university consists of 106 teachers with didactic and scientific qualifications.

The institution has two study blocks and three student hostels that provide students with housing, a library with three reading rooms, and four multimedia rooms which allow students and teaching staff to access the internet and to study new information technologies.

The study programme for Romanian and French Language and Literature is offered by the Faculty of Philology and History that was founded in 2002. Within the faculty there are four specialised departments: a) Department of Romanian philology, b) Department of Modern Languages, c) Department of History and Social Sciences, and d) Department of Pedagogy and Psychology.

Based on the information provided by the Self Evaluation Report the close cooperation relationships with a number of higher education institutions from the country and abroad play a significant role in the development of the University. Currently, the university has signed cooperation agreements and partnerships with eight universities from the Republic of Moldova, six universities from Romania, three universities from Ukraine and two higher education institutions from France.

3. Profile / Outcomes of the Programme

The programme is supposed to be designed in a way that the graduate of the programme can work in schools as a teacher of Romanian language and literature and French, but also as translator, corrector, etc. The obtained diploma shall allow the holders to continue their studies in Master-programmes and later PhD-programmes. Resulting from this goal, the mission and the objectives of the study programme are defined as follows:

According to the SER, the graduates are familiar with:

- the theoretical basis of psycho-pedagogy of ages;
- the theoretical basis of Romanian and French language didactics of any level;
- the existing curriculum system in the country regarding the teaching-learning the Romanian and French language at any level;
- new methodologies and techniques of teaching the Romanian and French language;
- the use of new technologies as teaching tools in foreign language classes.

Also, the graduate shall be aware of:

- the lexical, grammatical, and stylistic system of the Romanian and French language;
- the theoretical basis of fundamental subjects concerning language study, such as lexicology, history of the language, stylistics, phonetics, grammar, etc.
- the civilization, history, culture and literature of the countries' language of whom they will learn about;
- the methodical and didactic tools of teaching/learning Romanian and French language;
- the curricular standards of teaching/learning Romanian and French language at any level;
- the methodology of the Romanian and French language and its application in the professional practice;
- the bibliographic sources variety for carrying out an independent scientific research;
- practical aspects of psycho-pedagogy of ages.

The degree awarded is supposed to correspond with the 6th level of the qualification within the European Qualification Framework. During the years of study, students shall acquire both skills that help them to select, combine and use their knowledge appropriately as well as cross-sectional skills regarding their teamwork abilities and communication skills in oral and written forms in their mother tongue and French. Graduates are supposed to be able to appropriately use informational technology for their professional requirements.

The admission to the programme is carried out on the basis of the normative acts issued by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, based on specific regulations for organising and carrying out the admission in higher education institutions. For the purpose of monitoring the admission process, the rector has set up an Admission Committee to organise and conduct the required admission contest. Admission takes place based on the high school diploma. The admission contest is organised within the institution on for all Bachelor programmes. Following the information provided by the university a share of 15% of the total number of seats is provided in the matriculation process of a year is reserved for candidates with special needs, candidates in extraordinary life circumstances or candidates whose parents have participated in military operations for the defence of integrity and independence.

Experts' Evaluation

The programme, which has been running since 1999, has a clear focus, namely to train prospective school teachers of Romanian language and literature (major) and French language and literature (minor). During the site visit, this focus was stated clearly and in a comprehensible way although this focus is not defined in the related documents. In this respect, the transparency of the documents must be improved in a way that the focus of the programme becomes clear (**Finding 1a**). The overall goals, i.e. general pedagogical, language pedagogical and linguistic skills, theoretical knowledge regarding the linguistics of the Romanian and French language, as well as awareness with respect to the historical and socio- cultural context of the languages taught are defined in a clear way and suit well in the context of the programme. The intended career opportunities also include translator and editor in an attempt to meet the labour market demands at the regional and national levels. The students highlighted this double career opportunity as valuable.

However, the university must describe the intended learning objectives for translation in a more comprehensible way, e.g. by using the nomenclature of the European Model (**Finding 1b**).

The programme takes into consideration the economic and socio-cultural context of Southern Moldova, addressing the target population in the region – bilingualism (Russian and Romanian) is a highly specific feature and all the teaching staff involved in the programme are bilinguals. The outward orientation of the programme in question is also reflected in the strategy of offering distance learning. Furthermore, through its structure and content, the programme enables graduates to continue their education within Master's programmes and doctoral studies.

As far as the learning outcomes of the programme are concerned, they reflect both academic and labour market requirements. The aims of the programme are designed so as to enhance the employability of the students and their personal growth. The programme also enables graduates to reflect social, scientific and ethical aspects in their decisions. The intended learning outcomes comply with the profile of the institution and with the requirements of the appropriate level of the European and/or National Qualifications Framework. They are also consistent with the profile of the department in respect to teaching and research.

The experts see as specific strength of the programme the scientific/theoretical background in relation to Romanian and French theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, literature, culture and civilisation. However, the experts have the impression that the theoretical knowledge is only rarely related to the teaching practice. In this respect, the experts strongly recommend that the connection between theory and practice must be strengthened. The faculty must therefore hand in a concept paper in which it is described how the different disciplines in the programme (general linguistics, lexicology, phonetics, practical language learning, pedagogy/didactics) connect to each other to develop competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) for prospective language teachers (**Finding 2**).

Cross-border cooperation, especially with the Lower Danube University of Galați Romania, is a key strategic priority of the university, and some of the students are also enrolled in a similar programme at the Lower Danube University of Galați, being awarded a double degree upon the successful completion. International cooperation, apart from universities from Romania and Ukraine, includes partnerships with two French universities. Nevertheless, the faculty's efforts towards internationalisation remain relatively weak from the experts' point of view. Particularly in a language programme, more mobility options and more courses in English should be provided in order to enhance the programme's internationalisation (**Finding 3**). The recognition of the acquired competences at universities abroad is formally based on the ECTS and differences in credit points can be compensated through additional workload. However, the students mentioned that the recognition is not yet the usual case. In this respect, the faculty should consider the Lisbon-Convention in order to recognise credit points gained at universities abroad on the base on competencies (**Finding 4**).

The entrance requirements and the admission procedure (mainly based on the Baccalaureate Diploma), the transition possibilities and the selection processes are to a large extent defined. The admission policy is consistent with the institutional and the programme's goals and it ensures that applicants have the necessary qualifications to be admitted and benefit from the services on offer; there seem to be ethical standards and adequate practice in place in this regard. However, the entrance level and the target level for French is not clear from the documents and must therefore be defined, e.g. by referring to the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFL) (**Finding 1c**).

4. Curriculum

The programme takes four years and equals 240 Credit Points in the ECTS, 30 credits per semester. Based on information provided by CSU, the curriculum consists of classes reflecting the different fields of study covered by the programme. The psycho-pedagogical modules together with the modules of general culture and socio-humanistic subjects and the modules of fundamental subjects comprise 50% of the curriculum. The remaining 50% of the curriculum are reserved for specialisation-oriented classes.

According to the university, the programme envisages the following: courses with different forms of didactic activity, practical training, forms of evaluation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, final examination which includes major speciality exam, specialisation exam and defence of a final thesis.

Experts' Evaluation

The curriculum is generally well-suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Core competencies are developed in the first two years of the programme (involving language skills, language pedagogy, cultural studies, and basic knowledge in linguistics and literary studies); the third and fourth years allow for a certain specialisation in the subfields of the various disciplines taught. The learning outcomes of the individual elements contribute to the overall learning outcomes of the study programme.

The faculty runs a French Centre which also offers a large amount of extra-curricular activities, thus allowing the students to familiarize themselves with diverse aspects of French culture in an individual way. The structure the programme allows for international student mobility and contains instruments to promote international mobility (ECTS, diploma supplements, and learning agreements). However, these first attempts should be strengthened to improve the internationalisation particularly of this language programme (see **Findings 3** and **4**, see also chapter 3).

The panel of experts, however, identified some aspects that should be taken into account to better meet international standards:

The curriculum should be updated in particular with respect to linguistics. Contemporary approaches to linguistics such as functional and generative linguistics, applied linguistics (with a special focus on second language acquisition), corpus linguistics, and sociolinguistics should be included and made more visible in the module descriptions (**Finding 5**).

Especially in the French phonetics classes, teaching should be enhanced by using computer-based technology such as *Praat* (freely available scientific software package for the analysis of speech) or *Audacity* (free open source digital audio editor and recording software application). Accordingly, the equipment of the laboratories should be improved (**Finding 6**, see also chapter 7).

All elements of the curriculum are described in detail in a manual (including detailed module descriptions), which is available to the students as a central means of information. The module descriptions contain the intended learning outcomes as well as information regarding methods of learning and teaching, assessment methods, the expected workload (self-study and contact hours), and internships. The panel of experts, however, identified some aspects, that should be taken into account to improve transparency:

The language of instruction for each subject must be clearly defined in the module descriptions (**Finding 1d**). It must be clearly stated in which module(s) the students get acquainted with research methodology (**Finding 1e**). The target level for French in each module must be defined, e.g. by referring to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (**Finding 1f**). Learning outcomes must be described in a more transparent manner in the individ-

ual module descriptions (**Finding 1g**). They should be defined in terms of observable behaviour and kept distinct from envisaged competences.

The methods of teaching and assessment support the exchange between theory and practical application as well as between research and teaching. Where appropriate, students are involved in current research activities of the faculty members. The assessment methods are largely adequate and well-developed with regard to subject-related knowledge. They largely reflect the skills and the competencies taught in the study programme and are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and further programme objectives. However, more alternative assessment methods should be included and the students should also get more individual feedback on their individual performance and their learning progress (**Finding 7**). Alternative evaluation methods could include portfolios, research papers, and presentations which would allow for assessment and further development not only of the subject-related knowledge, but also with regard to the communication, presentation, team work and writing skills. The final Bachelor thesis, which is supervised by Ph. D. holders and Senior Lecturers, must not repeat topics from previous years and it must that the intended level of qualification is achieved through the programme. It is presented by the students in a public defence.

A credit point system is used to describe the students' workload, which is calculated for all elements of the programme in a clear and transparent way. There are procedures to monitor the student workload and to adapt the curriculum or the credits if necessary.

5. Student Support

The university describes that at the beginning of each year of study, the faculty's methodist offers a seminar to provide information concerning the system of higher education of Moldova, the study offers, and the opportunities of the chosen study programme. During the event, students are supposed to receive detailed information on how to obtain credits over the years of study. Also, they have to sign the study contracts which include the subjects that have to be studied. There is supposed to be a number of offers for students who want to go abroad, provided by academic mobility programmes such as Erasmus Mundus, etc. Information is available online at the university website.

Experts' Evaluation

The students of Cahul State University are well informed about their study programmes and the information that they receive is up-to-date. This includes information about the programme's content, the assessments, quality assurance, student exchange, and resitting exams, but also extracurricular activities, social activities, employment opportunities, etc. Students can reach out to the faculty's methodist, academic or administrative staff to seek for information they need. A brief programme description is available on the website of the university, the course descriptions are made available to students before each course starts. Due to the demographic situation in the region along with a rather low interest in studying, there is a clear emphasis on the employment opportunities. Cahul State University reaches out to prospective students in secondary schools and during study fairs. The university also prepares a so-called *Student guide* that lays down the goals, earning outcomes, the types of learning activities, the contents of the course, as well as assessments criteria. This *Student guide* is available in the department on request.

The university offers diverse counselling and student advisory services. Career counselling is provided that aims at, e.g., vocational guidance of high school students, advisory assistance on employment after graduation, and extracurricular training in languages. The latter takes place in the established "Language Centre" which is run by the university's teachers and financed by external aid, e.g. by foreign Embassies. In terms of academic development, teachers are available

to the students during their official office hours that are announced to students or at any other time after informing the teacher about the willingness of discussing programme-related or course-related matters (2-3 hours/day). Moreover, the university offers mental health counselling for students in the counselling centre that is run by a qualified psychologist and academic teacher. There exists no closed catalogue of the issues that a student can turn themselves to the centre, but the matters usually include help to students with learning difficulties, depression, and other illnesses. Those services are offered on a regular basis with publicly available working hours to the whole student community. The university also provides accommodation, catering facilities and socio-cultural events. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural activities could be better promoted to the students since they often do not know about these useful offers (**Finding 8**).

Opportunities for student exchange are offered, but they are rather limited. The students' interest in going abroad is also rather low (due to financial, recognition and cultural reasons); Romania seems to be the most popular destination. There is a learning agreement in place, but even so, students who came back from the period of study abroad had to repeat the study period. The Lower Danube University in Galaţi, Romania, constitutes an exception. Cahul State University has established cooperation with the Romanian university that guarantees full recognition of credits and allows students to obtain a double degree, studying full-time at both universities. The university could put more efforts in encouraging students to spend a period abroad – particularly in French-speaking countries – and try to minimise the obstacles, such as recognition procedures (**Findings 3** and **4**, see also chapter 3). There are very few students coming from abroad. Still, this fact allows an individual approach to every one of them; therefore they are well integrated into the academic community.

The practical stages of the study programme are fully integrated into the curriculum. All the internships are offered by the university that has cooperation with the educational institutions and schools across the country. Students are well informed about their internships placement in advance.

The general assessment regulations, i.e. methods of assessment throughout and at the end of the course as well as the method of calculating the final mark, are included in the course descriptions. This, along with detailed explanations, is presented at the beginning of each course by a teacher. The final mark constitutes a calculation of grades from the tests, essays, homework, mid-term/final exams. The assessment is performed by teachers responsible for each subject.

The responsibilities and structures with regard to the organisation of the exams are clearly defined. Exams are organised according to the plan that is approved by the department and announced to students at the beginning of the semester that the exams are to be taken. All exams take place in the exam period. In case of a failure, resits are offered in a suitable way according to the faculty's rules. The students confirmed that they are satisfied with those procedures and underlined that the academic and administrative staff is flexible. The programme finishes with a defence of a thesis that is written under supervision of academic teachers; the assessment is performed by a specially designed panel. The students graduate after defending a thesis and passing a final, professional state exam for teachers. The exams are subject specific and the form and structure of the thesis follows the university and faculty level regulations for the final thesis.

There exist regulations to compensate for illness, disadvantages, absence or other mitigating circumstance on faculty level. The students also confirmed that the university staff members are very supportive towards students in this regard.

There is evidence that teaching staff is using ICT tools inside and outside of the classroom. An on-line university library is available to the academic community. Still, there exists no platform for teaching-learning assessment purposes. The students should be encouraged to use more ICT tools and international research literature and international databases (**Finding 9**).

6. Employability

The university states that the programme enables graduates to continue their studies on the master level. Those who do not wish to obtain a master degree diploma can be employed in secondary schools as teachers of Romanian and French language and literature. Secondly, graduates can also become translators.

Experts' Evaluation

The graduates of this study programme are mainly employed as teachers of Romanian/French language and literature in secondary schools. If the graduates want to continue their studies in order to have a higher qualification, this programme degree diploma enables them to go further, following the courses of a master programme. The graduates of a master degree diploma may follow a PhD study programme or they may have also other jobs, such as: teacher in higher schools or in universities, translator, methodist, manager in the educational system, editor, corrector, and scientific researcher. A diploma supplement is handed to the students upon completion of the programme reflecting the qualifications achieved through it.

In general, the students who follow this study programme courses graduate in order to become teachers in public schools in the southern part of the Republic of Moldova. The graduates of this study programme are mainly young girls who want to become teachers and most of them are employed in the secondary schools from the villages placed around Cahul. The graduates are encouraged from the very first year of their enrolment as students to sign a contract with the higher education institution in order to accept after the graduation a job in a public school as a teacher of Romanian or French language and literature. This contract is addressed to those who follow a full-time programme, whose studies are supported from the State budget. The contract is still not a guarantee for getting a job. It depends on the vacancies in the region. If there are more graduates than positions, the graduates are ranked according to their marks.

This contract stipulates that the acceptance of the workplace offered by the State is mandatory for the graduate who signed the contract. The graduate has to respect this contract for the first three years of her/his employment as a teacher. During this period of three years s/he is extra paid, but after that the graduate who already became the teacher of the school where he has been distributed by the State receives the same salary as the other employed teachers and he is no longer under the demands of the contract. Most of the graduates remain in these schools; they establish their own families and personal and professional activities around these workplaces as teachers.

The students and the graduates declared during the site visit that they have chosen to follow the courses of this programme for the simple reason to become teachers, especially for the Romanian language and literature, most of all because they love to work with children and, also, because the State provides them a secure job. They also said that the structure of the study programme and the academic teachers offer them all the knowledge and skills needed in order to become good teachers. They feel prepared and well-trained for their future jobs. However, they prefer to teach Romanian language and literature and less French language and literature because they do not have enough practice in this foreign language due to the fact that they do not take part that often in mobility (see previous chapters). A positive aspect related to the employability is that this study programme allows obtaining a double diploma through the cooperation in the last few years with the Lower Danube University of Galați from Romania.

There is also another aspect related to the preference of Romanian language teaching which is linked to the politics of the university to admit the access to this study programme to students who have not studied French language at all in school. In that case, at the beginning of this study pro-

gramme, there are students with different levels of French knowledge and comprehension. Even if the curriculum is adapted to this state of art and the university offers special courses of French initiation, there is a discrepancy among the students in using and teaching the French language and literature.

Following the information from the SER, which were confirmed during site visit, at the end of each academic year, the Ministry of Education of Republic of Moldova presents the list of vacancies for graduates repartition in the employment. Thus in 2009, for the Romanian and French language and literature study programme the Ministry of Education offered seven vacancies. Two students were assigned according to the request from the Department of Education Cahul and 4 students had free choice. In 2011 two graduates were distributed, 3 graduates in 2012, 5 graduates with bachelor degree diploma in 2013 and 7 graduates in 2014. The information regarding personal distribution of graduates' employment is stored both in the Cahul University and in the Ministry of Education database. The university database regarding the distribution of graduates is constantly completed and the information is kept at the section of staff and students. The targeted Department monitors the employment of graduates who continue their Master studies and those employed in educational institutions in the city or in the Cahul district. So, the information on the requirements of the labour market is collected and analysed by the university. There is a clear and comprehensible description of potential fields of employment of graduates.

Also, various meetings are held periodically with graduates where the following domains are discussed: curriculum development, teaching methods, and quality assurance in higher education. The educational institution and, in particular, the profile department support graduates in organising various scientific conferences, round tables, methodical and didactical conferences etc. attended by active graduates.

7. Resources

Following the information provided in the SER in the academic year 2010-2011 the number of students enrolled at the Romanian and French language and literature programme was 15. The average teacher/student ratio was 1/1.

The Department of Modern Languages consists of three senior lecturers, two university lecturers and three assistant professors. The Departments of Pedagogy and Psychology, Computer Science and Mathematics, as well as the Department of History and Social Sciences are also involved in the teaching process of the programme under review.

A professional training for teaching staff is offered according to the university.

Experts' Evaluation

The experts' panel confirms that the personal resources are sufficient to guarantee a successful university education in the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature".

In the academic year 2012-2013, the number of students enrolled at the Romanian and French language and literature programme was 17 and the graduates were ten. The Department of Modern Languages consists of three senior lecturers, two university lecturers and three assistant professors. The Departments of Pedagogy and Psychology, Computer Science and Mathematics, as well as the Department of History and Social Sciences are also involved in the teaching process of the programme. The average teacher/student ratio is very balanced from the experts' point of view. The only point for improvement is that the number of personal staff in French should be increased (**Finding 10**).

All the employed staff members are qualified in fields related to the programme and to the subjects they teach. Teaching staff evaluation is periodical (by students and peers, based on questionnaires). They are growth-oriented via participation in conferences, mobility schemes, projects, etc. The number of Faculty members, their academic background and their professional experiences are relevant and adequate for successful accomplishment of their respective duties and assignments at the tertiary level. The teachers are very dedicated and hardworking people. Their publications and research activities in progress indicate their commitment to professional development. Seven of the teachers involved in this study programme participated in international projects and in staff or research mobility.

All staff involved in the teaching of the programme are documented including their academic and other relevant qualification as well as research activities and quantitative involvement (teaching hours) in the programme. If there are associate/part time lecturers involved in the programme, there is a procedure to ensure the qualification of the lecturers. There are procedures to ensure lecturers are familiar with the requirements in the programme. There are procedures to ensure appropriate didactic qualification and training of the teaching staff. A professional training for teaching staff is offered to allow the staff to further improve and enhance their quality and competences in teaching. The institution also has adequate strategies and mechanisms of performance promotion and staff motivation.

The financial resources are centrally planned. At the beginning of the study year, the departments or the faculty propose expenditures for certain extracurricular activities (ex: freshmen prom, scientific conference of teachers on the faculty, etc.). In order to organise the programme, the Department has access to all lecture rooms belonging to the Faculty, on the basis of schedule programming of classes and seminar. The financial resources of the study programme are decided at Council of Administration meeting, which is held every week. In this context, the Faculty of Philology and History, where the study programme for Romanian/French language and literature can be found, does not have its own budget, because it is a small faculty and budget sources are centrally managed. Much of budgetary resources consist of income tuition fees. The number of learning resources provided in the study programme including e-materials and printed materials are appropriate.

The institution has two large blocks, furnished classrooms, seminar rooms with smart boards, student hostels that provide students with housing, a library with three reading rooms, equipped with textbooks, books, encyclopaedias, compendiums, dictionaries very valuable in the Republic and abroad, four multimedia rooms that provide students and teachers with the possibility to access Internet and study new information technologies. The faculty has lecture rooms appropriate to the process of study relative to the number of students in order to achieve the expected results. To students can also use some labs. The specific services and centres within the University play a major role in improving the process of education: the "French Centre of School Resource", the "Centre of Romanian Culture Onisifor Ghibu", the "English Resource Centre", the "UN Documentation Centre", and the "Centre Pro-Europe Cahul Legal Clinic". A qualified system of studies and teaching was established in these centres. Still, the students expressed the desire to even more enhance their French language skills. For that aim, it is recommendable to use more computer-based technology, especially in French phonetics classes, and to accordingly improve the ICT equipment of the laboratories (**Finding 6**, see also chapter 4).

8. Quality Assurance

Based on the information provided in the application of the department, in addition to the university wide quality assurance concept, the department has its own philosophy on quality. Young teachers are supposed to be specially trained in teaching at the university level and practice

methodological seminars as well as roundtables for discussing the teaching methodology. They are trained, in addition to training/teaching competences, also in competences for counselling, monitoring and facilitating the learning processes. Continuous activities are supposed to be conducted for identification, development, testing, implementation and evaluation of new and effective learning techniques, including new computer applications and the information technologies.

Students quarterly assess the quality of the teaching staff completing with the help of an online questionnaire. The questionnaires are supposed to be in accordance with the regulation of the teaching staff evaluations. The results of these evaluations are confidential and accessible to the dean, the quality manager, the head of department, and the assessed person.

Experts' Evaluation

The documentation provided by Cahul State University and the interviews held with the university, faculty and department administration as well as the teaching staff and students indicate that the institution has established an adequate quality assurance system. The institutional Quality Assurance Handbook contains criteria for curriculum design, the satisfaction level of the students, and the labour market needs. In general, all stakeholders have an understanding of the value of quality, quality policy and related procedures across the administrative and academic structures as well as for the instructional process and envisaged educational outcomes.

The university has implemented the institutional policy to enhance the quality of education through Senate discussions of and decisions on quality procedures. Towards the end of each academic year, the university holds annual conferences on necessary changes to be introduced at the institution in line with the national regulations. In addition, the Rector's Office annually evaluates the scientific and didactic reports from the Faculties. The Quality Assurance Department is especially responsible for monitoring the implementation of quality assurance related procedures and new directives from the Ministry.

The success of the institutional quality policy depends on the involvement, communication and collaboration of various stakeholders; importantly, it depends on the effective and efficient implementation by the academic units. The panel of experts concludes that the University administration has exhibited strong effort to ensure and enhance the quality which is evident from the self-evaluation documentation and the interviews held during the site visit. In this regard, the results of the interviews held by the panel of experts with the Faculty administration and academic staff also indicate that a more effective strategy on the Faculty level is necessary for the continuous enhancement of the quality of the programme under review. Cahul State University collects data on student progress that are analysed by the faculty's management. The experts' panel has witnessed that the faculty is engaging students to a large extent both in and outside of the courses. Students' and graduates' feedback is formally and informally collected for the purpose of the enhancement of the programme. However, the experts' panel has not witnessed any clear evidence of using this data for the purpose of the enhancement of the specific study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature".

The results of the students' and graduates' off-line and on-line evaluations of their teachers and suggestions on the programme in general are an integral part of the quality assurance at the institution. In addition, the weekly tutorials held by the teaching staff allow routine interaction with students and consideration of their views for the enhancement of the programme quality. In this regard, the panel of experts noted a very good rapport between teachers and students. Although the students are represented at the Senate and various Boards, can voice their opinions and vote, their involvement in the decision-making must be more reflected in the pertinent documentation. So far, the data provided remains on a more abstract level of the university and does not show specific data about the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature". In this

regard, the minutes of various discussions and meetings held in relation to quality assurance of the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature" as well as the relevant data must be kept and maintained regularly, accurately, completely and made accessible to all those concerned.

Based on the above said, the experts would like to demand that the faculty must develop a concept paper on how the study programme is subject to quality assurance along the following lines (**Finding 11**):

a. The paper must describe a system for data collection on the progression of the students, on their workload as well as on the success of the graduates of the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature".

b. The paper must also describe how the data and the evaluation results are used for the development of the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature".

c. The faculty must also show evidence for the working of the quality assurance system with respect to the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature".

d. The paper must show that students of the study programme "Romanian and French Language and Literature" are involved in the system on a regular basis and that students are also informed about the results of quality assurance.

9. Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit with conditions the Bachelor programme "**Romanian and French Language and Literature**" with the degree "**Bachelor of Education**" offered by **Cahul State University, Republic of Moldova.**

Findings:

1. The transparency of the documents must be improved:

   a. The documentation must be clear about the focus of the programme which is teacher education.

   b. The faculty should apply the European model to describe competences of translation.

   c. The entrance level and the target level for French at programme level must be defined clearly, e.g. by referring to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR).

   d. The language of instruction for each subject must be defined.

   e. It must be described in which modules research methodology is taught.

   f. The target level for French in each module must be defined, e.g. by referring to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR).

   g. The learning outcomes must be described in a transparent manner.

2. The connection between theory and language teaching practice must be strengthened. The faculty must hand in a concept paper in which it is described how the different disciplines in the programme (linguistics, practical language learning, and pedagogy/didactics) are interrelated to each other in order to develop skills for future language teachers.

3. The faculty should strengthen their efforts towards internationalisation. Particularly, more mobility options and more courses in English should be provided.

4. The faculty must consider the Lisbon-Convention in order to recognise credit points gained at universities abroad on the base on competencies.

5. The curriculum should be updated in particular with respect to linguistics. Contemporary approaches to linguistics such as functional and generative linguistics, applied linguistics (with a special focus on second language acquisition), corpus linguistics, and sociolinguistics should be included and made more visible in the module descriptions.

6. It is recommendable to use more computer-based technology, especially in French phonetics classes, and to accordingly improve the ICT equipment of the laboratories.

7. More alternative assessment methods should be included in the study programme. The students should also get more individual feedback on their performance and their progress.

8. The socio-cultural activities should be better promoted to the students.

9. The students should be encouraged to use of international research literature and international databases. They should also be more encouraged to use ICT.

10. The number of personal staff in French should be increased.

11. The faculty must develop a concept paper on how the study programme is subject to quality assurance:

    a. The paper must describe a system for data collection on the progression of the students, on their workload as well as on the success of the graduates.

    b. The paper must also describe how the data and the evaluation results are used for the development of the study programme.

    c. The faculty must also show evidence for the working of the quality assurance system with respect to the study programme.

    d. The paper must show that students are included on a regular basis and that students also know about the results of quality assurance.