



## Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the degree programme:

**“Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy”**  
(Licentiate in Educational Sciences, equals B.Ed.)

offered by **Alecu Russo Bălți State University**

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments of the university and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting on 20./21. August 2018, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programme **“Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy”** (Licentiate in Educational Sciences, equals B.Ed.) offered by **Alecu Russo Bălți State University, Moldova** is accredited according to the AQAS criteria for Programme Accreditation.
2. The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the AQAS criteria for programme accreditation and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **five years** and is valid until **30. September 2023**.

The following **recommendation** is given for further improvement of the programme:

1. Internationalization activities should be intensified, e.g. by encouraging the academic staff and the students to use mobility programmes to widen up a broader perspective on their understanding of teaching and learning.

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

## **Experts' Report**

**on the degree programme:**

**“Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy”  
(Licentiate in Educational Sciences, equals B.Ed.)**

**offered by Alecu Russo Bălți State University**

Visit to the University: 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> of January 2016  
additional desk review in April/May 2018

### **Panel of Experts:**

<b>Prof. Dr. Christian Gleser</b>	Karlsruhe University of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of School and Education Development for Primary and Secondary Schools
<b>Prof. Dr. Claudiu Marian Bunăiașu</b>	University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences
<b>Prof. Dr. Julia Kosinár</b>	University of Applied Science Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Institute for Primary Education
<b>Serban Iosifescu</b>	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, Bucharest (representative from the profes- sional field)
<b>Melanie Fröhlich</b>	Student at the University of Mainz, Teacher Education Spanish/Chemistry (student representative)
<b>Coordinator:</b> Ronny Heintze / Doris Herrmann	AQAS e. V., Cologne, Germany

## **1 Introduction**

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme “Pedagogy in primary education and Pre-school pedagogy” offered by Alecu Russo Bălți State University, Moldova. The review is based on the criteria that were 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<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> of May 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 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 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.

Based on the report and considering the comments of the University the Accreditation Commission decided in its 63rd meeting on 23rd/24th of May 2016 to postpone the decision on the accreditation of the programme as there were a number of findings documenting that standards are not yet met. The University was presented with the option to update the programme and resubmit the updated documentation to the experts within 18 months. In November 2017 the University resubmitted the updated documentation.

The above mentioned expert group reviewed the documentation and concluded that a second site visit would not be necessary in order to assess the standards for the updated programme. The following report marks the assessment after updating the programme resulting from the postponement of the accreditation decision.

## **2 General Information**

Bălți State University is a public institution, financed from the state budget, assigned as a structure of higher education in the Republic of Moldova that develops its activity according to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Education Code, the Code on Science and Innovation of the Republic of Moldova and other relevant documents.

The University has four faculties: 1. the Faculty of Philology; 2. the Faculty of Exact, Economic and Environmental Sciences; 3. the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Arts; and 4. the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. The University has about 6,000 students (undergraduate students, Master’s students and PhD students) in 44 programmes in 26 different fields of studies within the before mentioned four faculties. In 13 specialised departments, educational services are provided in Romanian and Russian as well as in a small number of programmes, in English, German and French.

## **3 Profile / Outcomes of the Programme**

The university describes that the study programme “Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy” in its full-time and part-time version provides opportunities for developing a system of competences in the fields of primary and preschool education, and also in the field of education sciences. These competences are required in order to work as a teacher in primary school and in preschool institutions.

Developing the students' skills should be achieved by providing a theoretical and practical pedagogical training in general pedagogy, general psychology, theory of curriculum and of new trends in teaching methodology, education theory, as well as theory and practice of evaluation. The academic training is supposed to be designed to form the foundation for teaching the school subjects included in the National Curriculum for compulsory education, the stages of pre-school and primary education. In addition, transfer competences are supposed to be developed, such as communication skills and interpersonal skills, using new technologies in teaching, and teaching research skills.

At the end of their studies, graduates will according to the SER have the following professional and transversal competences:

Professional competences:

- The conceptual approach to the educational process based on knowledge and on applying patterns, categories and principles of education.
- Planning and carrying out research in educational issues by identifying the best solutions for achieving quality in primary and pre-school education.
- Giving meaning and direction to the educational process in primary school and in preschool institutions by formulating learning outcomes.
- Designing the educational plan in primary and preschool education by anticipating its elements.
- Evaluating the educational situation, the outcomes of the teaching process and the pupil's academic achievement.
- Organizing and monitoring the education process in primary and pre-school education by taking into account various social and cultural contexts.

Transversal competences:

- Applying the principles, norms and values of professional ethics in one's work strategy.
- Identifying roles and responsibilities in a plurispecialized team and applying techniques of communication, of establishing relationships and of efficient work within the team.
- Identifying opportunities for life-long learning and efficient use of resources and learning techniques for personal development.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

The experts can positively confirm that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are documented and published. They reflect both academic and professional requirements. The academic level of the outcomes is aligned with the requirements of the Bachelor level of the European and/or National Qualifications Framework. The programme is consistent with the profile of the department in respect to teaching and research. The title of the programme reflects the contents of the curriculum. In this context it has to be recognized that the experts were able to identify the outcome of what probably marked an intensive developing and defining process as clearly the newly defined learning outcomes have been heavily improved and match not only the programme profile, but clearly are also oriented towards nowadays requirements both on the academic as well as the professional level.

In addition, the study programme is available as a full-time and a part-time programme. Respectively the updated documentation appropriately puts in place curricular elements for both options allowing for the required transparency.

In the prior programme design the programme consisted in both versions of 58 courses from different competence fields and it was hard to identify how these courses are structurally linked both to each other and to the more abstract level of the intended qualification goals. The focus clearly was put on national standard implementation what was not wrong – however it partially prevented the programme to be able to explain its own coherence. After the intense programme review the faculty is now able to present and explain how the qualifications, standards and courses are con-

nected to each other. An alignment table shows how courses are connected and contribute to learning outcomes.

In this context, the experts initially also noticed the lack of sound descriptions of the diverse practical stages as well as of a concept on the meta level that connects all the courses and the internships into one concept of professionalisation. In the updated documentation it now becomes clear how the improvement of the competence levels from the first to the last year is taken into account in relation to the intended outcomes of every internship or practical course on one hand and the theoretical lectures and seminars on the other hand. Now it becomes clear how the role of responsible staff for the internships A and B, working with simulations in the second and third year, starting with passive, initial internships in the first year, are connected. Still it seems recognizable that to a certain extent the university seems to follow a rather traditional path (more like a vocational training), using traditional methods of higher education. However, the updated documentation also represents the results of discussions towards a more modern teacher education within the academic staff and the head of the department. To further support this trend, it will remain necessary to encourage the academic staff and the students to use mobility programmes to widen up a broader perspective on their understanding of teaching and learning (**Finding 1**).

#### **4 Curriculum**

The programme “Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy” can be completed in a full-time programme and in a part-time programme. The duration of studies is four years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. In both versions 240 ECTS credit points are acquired. The academic year is divided into two semesters of 15 weeks each.

The curriculum is composed of different components: the fundamental component, the component of training general skills and abilities, the component of socio-humanistic orientation, the component of the main specialty, the component of the second specialty, and the component of orientation to another field of training at cycle II (Master - M). The programme also includes diverse internships. In the first and second year, students must complete the initiation internship I and II. The teaching internship A (six weeks) and teaching internship B (four weeks) are scheduled for the eighth semester in the full-time programme and for the tenth semester in the part-time programme. In the last semester of each version, the students must also pass another internship of four weeks.

According to the Self Evaluation Report the teaching methods used in the programme are student-centred including, problem-based learning, projects, mixed learning, network learning communities, interactive lectures, laboratory work, seminars, consultations, internships, writing research papers and the thesis. Final assessments take the following forms: course exams (oral, written, combined, and public) and graduation exams (the thesis and the public defence of the thesis). During the studies, the students are supposed to write two research papers. The first paper is written in the third and fourth semesters in the specialty disciplines for the second specialty Preschool Pedagogy. The second paper is written in the fifth and sixth semesters in the specialty disciplines for the main specialty Primary Education. The research papers aim specifically at developing the students’ skills to choose information and to analyse it critically, to summarise specialised scientific articles, to analyse the state of the art in the educational practice, and to compose a bibliography on the topic.

#### **Experts’ Evaluation**

The curriculum, consisting of 49 courses, is well suited to achieve the updated intended learning outcomes, which are now well defined and assessable.

The programme is valued as a paradigm of a postmodern curriculum: the multidimensional approach of the university curriculum, the curriculum design and the student-centred curriculum. The curricular products of the programme fulfil the conditions of relevance and systematisation. The disciplines in the study plan ensure the compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework.

The educational plan contains the disciplines' shares with sequential organisation in the educational disciplines. The curricular structure in both versions of the programme is adequate for the development of applicable competences needed in primary and preschool pedagogy as well as for the development of competences and skills for lifelong learning. Partnerships are established with preschools and primary schools where internship activities are conducted and where some of the graduates of the programme are employed.

The experts particularly recognize the efforts of the University to move towards a competence based modularization also leading to a reasonable amount of exams for students.

With the required adaptations to the curriculum in the newly updated curriculum description now also the interconnection between curricular elements becomes visible. The experts are convinced that on the long run this will also lead to a stronger perception of interconnected competency development by the students.

In the initial curriculum reviewed in 2016 the mentioned disciplines and approaches were rather old-fashioned and traditional. Clearly the experts recognize that in the new programme version more modern theories are included and the shift from content orientation to competency orientation is obvious. The experts clearly encourage the department to continue this path.

The applied teaching-, learning-, and assessment methods generally facilitate the realisation of the curricular objectives, and the transfer of cognitive acquisitions as well as they support the relationship between cognitive research, teaching and learning. Along with classical methodology and teaching strategies specific to disciplines, interactive learning strategies are used. Students are familiarised with the basic methodology of scientific research (empirical and experimental), which is applied in project development and license work.

Recognizing the remaining challenge that the students strongly require analytical and evaluative skills as well as in scientific skills the experts appreciate the initiatives of students' scientific conferences as well as interuniversity student scientific colloquia. The department should continue to intensify its efforts in this area in order to further reduce the role of repetitive and applicative skills. The experts recommend continuing the path of using more innovative instructional strategies and methods such as constructivist learning strategies, metacognitive strategies, virtual learning environments, and collaborative learning.

All elements of the curriculum are described in a handbook. After the update clearly and improvement towards transparency becomes visible. Particularly the descriptions of the internships were improved and now meet the expected standard. The curriculum is publicly available. The programme is described taking into account the curricular variables such as contents, instructional strategies, temporal resources, and assessment strategies. The framework for the programme given by the university contains functional instruments and structures to generally promote international mobility such as diploma supplements, transcripts of records, and learning agreements.

The exam concept is mainly based on summative exams certifying the acquisition of cognitive and academic qualifications. Formative and summative evaluations are utilised alternatively and complementary traditional methods of evaluation (oral examinations, written examinations, practical examinations: useful in verifying knowledge) and partly alternative methods (project work, reflexive portfolio, self-evaluation) relevant for assessing the skills' development. Recognizing the requirements of the Framework Plan for Higher education in Moldova combined with the newly applied model of modularization the examination load in the full term curriculum is now six to seven exams per semester, which can be seen as appropriate.

## **5 Student Support**

### Study Organisation

The Dean promotes according to the SER the university strategy, policy, objectives and priorities in the field of quality; she or he monitors the implementation of general and specific objectives. The Deputy Dean is the Dean's representative and is in charge of making the schedule, checking attendance, designing current and final evaluations. The Head of the Department Educational Sciences coordinates the execution of the study plan. The Head of the Department appoints one teacher in charge of quality. She or he checks the ways general and specific objectives regarding quality are followed, as well as objectives regarding staff training, planning and conducting assessments/internal audits and individual assessments. The lecturer in charge of the course is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the educational process in the disciplines she or he teaches.

### Information and Support

To inform the students about the programme, the university uses its website, flyers, and a bulletin board. The university offers according to their statement a study plan for each academic year.

The teaching internships A and B are supposed to be organised and carried out according to the following Regulations: the framework Regulations on internships in higher education, the provisional Regulations on organising and conducting internships, the programme for the specialty internship and the programme for the internship. The University and the Council of Education, Youth and Sports from Bălți have signed partnership agreements. Students are assigned to internship according to the order and to the corresponding request.

### Admission and enrolment

The enrolment to the programme is done on the basis of the Regulations of organising and conducting enrolment to higher education studies (cycle I) in institutions of higher education from the Republic of Moldova and the Regulations of organising and conducting enrolment to higher education studies in Alecu Russo Balti State University, approved by the decision of the Senate of Alecu Russo Balti State University.

### Assessment

The students' assessment is done following the "Regulations on evaluating student academic outcomes in Alecu Russo State University of Balti, approved by the decision of the Senate". The Regulations are published on the University website and are included in every register.

Attendance is compulsory to a minimum of 70% and it conditions allowing the student to take the assessment. The final grade for the course includes the current assessment result composed of different components, for example activity during course work, seminars, laboratory work, and the result of the individual work, as well as the mark obtained in the assessment.

Final evaluations are organised during sessions which are scheduled according to the academic calendar and which are approved by the Senate. The assessments are monitored by the Vice-Rector for teaching activity and by the Quality Assurance Council of Alecu Russo State University of Balti. The number of failed examinations is assessed at the Dean's office. Repeated and additional sessions are held on this basis.

### Credits

The students' workload is measured in credits. One credit is quantified in two types of hours: hours of direct contact and hours of independent work. The hour of direct contact is the hour spent by the student in the classroom, in which s/he benefits from the teacher's assistance in the form of lectures, seminars, labs, practice. The hour of independent work is the hour which is evaluated in terms of the volume of student's work outside the classroom, designed to achieve the learning outcomes of the disciplines. In full-time education, one credit equals 15 hours of direct contact plus 15 hours of independent work, and in part-time education, it equals six hours of direct

contact plus 24 hours of independent work. The validation of the students' workload is stipulated in diverse official documents, according to which the university carries out respective evaluations.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

On a general level, the programme in both versions (including internships) is implemented in a way that allows students to complete their studies in the advertised regular course duration.

The students feel well-informed about all aspects of the programme. They confirmed that all information about the courses is available on the internet or at the faculty. The teachers also send information via email.

The assessment regulations are defined and published. They are available to the students. Changes to the examination concept can be documented and explained. The responsibilities and structures with regard to the organisation of the exams are clearly defined. The organisation of the exams is appropriate with regard to timing. Examination dates are published to the students with appropriate timing. Resits are offered in a suitable way. The students described that the teachers inform them about the form of the exams and the examination process at the beginning of each course. Sometimes, the teachers even provide lists of questions for the final assessments which are helpful from the perspective of the students. There are also transparent and published regulations to compensate for disadvantages, illness, absence or other mitigating circumstances. The entrance requirements, transition possibilities and selection processes are clearly defined for the programme.

The programme uses a credit point system to describe the student workload. The student workload is calculated for all elements of the programme. The calculation of the workload is transparent. The ratio of contact hours is regulated in the normative act: 1:1 in the full-time bachelor programme and 1:6 in the part-time programmes. This workload includes theoretical classes, practical classes, laboratory classes, consultation and examinations. There are procedures to monitor the student workload and to adapt the curriculum / the credits if necessary.

The students feel also well-supported by their teachers and other staff of the university. They mentioned that the institution provides up to date information on the programme. Student advisory service is also available to students. These services are offered continuously and information on these services is made available to students in an adequate way.

There are specific advisory services on the substance level. The teaching staff offers frequent consultation hours and is available to students. The students depicted that every professor offers two contact hours during the week but that they are in addition always open for questions, for example after class. The free communication between teachers and students was particularly highlighted by the students.

The programme includes in both versions practical elements which are credited and where students are supported in finding practical placements, if needed. The students especially acknowledged the organisation of and support during the internships. They feel well-prepared and supported.

Specific offers for exchange students are available on the university level and learning agreements are used to facilitate the mobility of students. In addition, there are regulations for the recognition of credits gained at other higher education institutions and outside of the higher education institution. However, the students mentioned that nobody has so far gone abroad due to the lack of English skills. On the faculty level, the efforts towards the practical implementation of internationalisation should be strengthened and students should be encouraged to take part in mobility options (compare **Finding 1**).

On the faculty level, an electronic platform and other ICT means are used within teaching-learning-assessment processes, which are appreciated by the students.



## 6 Employability

With the programme, the university aims to train teachers in a full-time and in a part-time study version for the dual specialty Primary Education Pedagogy and Preschool Pedagogy. The employment possibilities are according to the university teachers in primary school, preschool educators, deputy directors in primary school, and methodist in preschool institutions.

The university describes that the qualifications obtained in the process of studying are assessed in relation to the job requirements by examining the employers' opinion during the internship, within the pedagogical research activity, and within the activities of continuous learning.

### Experts' Evaluation

The programme in both versions responds to the needs of the labour market and offers good job opportunities for the graduates. The programme was produced in cooperation with other Universities (the State University of Chisinau, the "Alecu Russo" University of Balti, the Pedagogical State University "Ion Creanga" of Chisinau) in order to respond adequately to the needs of the labour market.

There is a clear and comprehensible description of potential fields of employment of graduates: the students know precisely what are the employment opportunities and the added value of the programme for the teaching career, especially for the part-time students, who enrol, usually, in this programme in order to compete for management and inspection positions within the system.

The University management estimates that over 80% of the graduates are employed, after graduation, as primary or pre-school teachers. On the other hand, there are not exact and comprehensive data, but, according to the statements of the University and Faculty management, in two years there will be data regarding the destination of each student after graduation.

The attractiveness of the programme and the perspectives for employment are enhanced by the legal provisions stating the obligation of initial education in Universities for all teachers, regardless the level of education (i.e. including pre-primary and primary teaches). For this reason, there is a high demand for the part-time programme, where the enrolled students are already employed in kindergartens or primary schools, but trained in pedagogical high schools or other tertiary non-university schools. Moreover, the students underline the usefulness of the double qualification (i.e. pre-school and primary education) in order to find an appropriate job placement.

The University and the Faculty ensure good feedback loops from stakeholders (mainly employers and graduates) by the multiple ways the specific information is collected and analysed. Besides the feedback offered by part-time students, there are other several ways in which information is collected:

- In-service (refresher) programmes for teachers and head teachers organised by the Faculty.
- Research papers realised by the students (several compulsory courses and via graduation paper).
- Surveys with questionnaires for students, regarding the correlation between the theoretical courses and the reality encountered during the internships.
- Surveys with questionnaires for teachers, head teachers and for the personnel of the county management structures - during conferences, seminars, workshops and other events organised by the Faculty for the teaching and management staff.
- Analysing the demand for teachers, coming from national and regional public authorities – indicating the vacant teaching positions.

By using information collected from multiple sources, the appropriateness of the programme for the needs of the labour market is enhanced.

A diploma supplement is handed to the students upon completion of the programme reflecting and describing the knowledge and skill achieved through it.

## 7 Resources

The programme accepts 175 students a year who may be enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis.

The number of permanent staff members employed at the Department of Educational Sciences is according to the SER 14 people. All academic positions are occupied by professionals skilled in teaching the required disciplines (Higher Education Diploma holders, Master's degree holders, PhD degree holders, postdoctoral degree holders). For the training of the teaching staff, the faculty reports the participation in scientific conferences and workshops. Specific modules are imported of other faculties, especially Psycho-pedagogy, Psychology, and Socio-Humanities and Social Assistance. The Department also employs lecturers on the basis of part-time or short-term employment contracts. The Chairperson informs these lecturers about the requirements to be followed during the teaching process and members of the Chair observe their classes. The non-academic positions are according to the SER occupied by staff members who hold higher education diplomas, as e.g. Bachelor's degrees and/or Master's degrees.

The university reports as material resources the following: equipped classrooms and a lecture hall, offices, the laboratory „Innovational Educational Technologies“, the research centre „Parents' school“ and the research centre in Education Sciences, an assembly hall, a concert room, a sport complex, a gym for correction gymnastics, as well as the university scientific library. The University Scientific Library has a book stock of about 290,700 titles in 1,013,293 copies (in 52 languages).

### Experts' Evaluation

All staff members involved in the teaching of the programme are documented including the quantitative involvement (teaching hours) in the programme. It is ensured that the teaching capacity is available for the period of accreditation. If positions expire during the period of accreditation, the position will be reappointed or there is a continuity plan. Based on this, the experts can confirm that the personal resources in numbers are sufficient for the programme in the full-time and part-time version.

With respect to the quality of the staff members, the experts originally were unable to assess the available staff qualification due to a lack of documentation. Following the new documentation after the postponement the experts could review the academic short CVs and can positively conclude that the staff is appropriate to train all the intended qualifications. This confirms the positive impressions during the site visit, where the experts experienced motivated teachers. It seems as if especially the younger colleagues are doing their doctoral theses in some interesting research projects, concerning important subjects of a modern teacher education. Also the experts recognize good efforts to improve research quality. In this respect, the experts support the suggestion to strengthen the young lecturers after their PhD, taking them as an important resource for further development of the teaching staff and the programme.

The university management mentioned that it is obligatory for all professors/teachers to participate in the pedagogical-psychological modules. They also organise e.g. courses for the use of ICT and to train foreign language skills. Based on the newly available documentation it becomes clear that there is a vivid and diverse approach towards the continuous development and training of staff regarding new technologies and modern methods in the field of primary preschool education. The experts want to underline the further potential that exists in this field by increased international cooperation, which is already underway (**compare Finding 1**).

Appropriate material resources such as a library with a stock of research literature, journals and other information sources in pedagogy etc. are available for carrying out the programme although the research literature reflects the need for continuous updating. The equipment of specific work

places in the library reflects professional standards and is adequate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes; computer workplaces are also available for the students to do some literature search on the internet. This way, students also have the possibility to look for more modern approaches.

## **8 Quality Assurance**

In November 2008, the university started activities to implement a university wide quality management system that is also supposed to be applied for the programme under review. Quality assurance procedures regarding the curriculum are discussed during chair sessions at least twice during a year of study. All the professors of the chair participate at the session.

The university describes that the teaching activities within the programme are managed and coordinated by the head of the chair. Each professor and lecturer is obliged to develop the curriculum of the discipline in accordance with the "Curriculum Framework-Structure" approved by the Senate of the university. The description of the curriculum must contain at least the following components: course identifying information (discipline), integration of the course in the programme, prior skills, and skills developed within the course, aims of the course, contents, individual work activities, evaluation, and informational resources. Each curricular element is discussed and proposed for approval at the meeting of the chair, where it is reviewed by the faculty Methodical Commission and approved by the Faculty Scientific Council.

As laid down in the SER, the students' opinion is identified by interviews, surveys, and the choice of optional courses that have a higher rating among students. At the end of each course, the students fill in the evaluation form which is designed to evaluate the activity of the teaching staff including the quality of the course content, the quality of the seminar presentation, the organisation of the teaching, the student-teacher relationship, and the quality of the assessment/s.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

The University has a strategy for quality assurance, a council of quality, quality related regulations and plans for audits, all made public on the University website. The University has the quality management system certified according to the ISO 9001:2008 standard. Since the programme offers a full time and a part time option the relevant mechanisms for quality assurance cover both tracks. This is reflected in documents published on the website of the university.

The regulations approved at university level ensure the participation of all main stakeholders (teachers, students and employers) in the decision making process. The head of the Quality Assurance Department is familiar with quality assurance standards and procedures (mainly with the ISO 9000 "family" of standards, but less with the European Standards and Guidelines). At this level, the experts state that a quality-culture, which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance, is developing. There are more than 20 certified internal auditors and around 20 quality audits are planned at University level, among other, the audit of the internships. Moreover, it is envisaged a new certification of the quality management system (this time, according to the ISO 9001:2015 standard).

There is a student "self-governance" structure at University and Faculty levels (reflected by specific web pages on the University portal), with potential for consistent feedback on multiple aspects of student life as for example:

- Student progression and success rates.
- Students' satisfaction with their programmes.
- Profile of the student population.
- Employability of graduates and evaluation of the programme by graduates.
- The faculty / programme own key performance indicators.

- Results of teaching-staff and course evaluation,
- De facto student workload.

While policy exist and practice is put in place largely from the central level, the experts recognize that the direct impact of continuous activities on the programme “Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy” is visible only to a limited extent. The students mentioned that they are regularly questioned on their satisfaction regarding the courses and on the usefulness of the programme and individual courses. The feedback is collected and, according the declarations of the university professors and students, is used for content improvement. Clearly the external feedback of the accreditation postponement led to intensive improvement activities that are well documented and directly related to the programme.

The quality manual and procedures are disseminated at Faculty level and, not to the experts surprise , the implementation of the quality management system at Faculty and programme level is still developing: there is a Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation at Faculty level, an activity plan for this Commission, but during the site visit the plan was unknown among the teachers and there was little evidence regarding the achievement of these activities and, mainly, regarding their impact. The updated documentation shows progress, however the question of dissemination and active involvement cannot be thoroughly assessed on paper. Nevertheless considering the provided documentation and annexes the exerts believe that the department is on a good track also to intensify the visible impact of continuous improvement based on evaluation involving the different stakeholders.

## 9 Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to **accredit** the Bachelor programme “**Pedagogy in Primary Education and Pre-school Pedagogy**” (B.Ed.) offered by **Alecu Russo Bălți State University, Republic of Moldova**.

### Findings:

1. Internationalization activities should be intensified, e.g. by encouraging the academic staff and the students to use mobility programmes to widen up a broader perspective on their understanding of teaching and learning.