



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**EVALUATION REPORT OF  
FIRST CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMME  
*LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES***  
at Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University,  
Ukraine

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Law and Human Rights Activities</i>
Study field	Law
Type of the study programme	University
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3 years 10 months)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Law
Date of registration of the study programme	May 25, 2017

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for Evaluation of Ongoing Study Programmes of Foreign Higher Education Institutions**, approved by Order No V-7 of 20 February 2015 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution<sup>1</sup>*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of an external evaluation report of the study programme a decision to accredit study programme may be taken. The evaluation of the programme can be either **positive** or **negative**.

### 1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	SER Bachelor
2	Ukraine Law on Higher Education (general)
3	Higher Education Law of Ukraine - Bachelor in Law
4	Education Program Bachelor
5	Curriculum Bachelor
6	Curriculum Bachelor Supplement 1
7	Course Descriptions Bachelor
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<sup>1</sup> The site visit was organized via online technologies due to force-majeure circumstances (an epidemic situation)

### 1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

The Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University (hereafter referred to as University, HEI) is a relatively small private institution of higher education founded in 2001 in Uzhhorod on the Western border of Ukraine with Slovakia. The HEI offers degree programs in law, finance, banking and insurance, psychology, theology, and philosophy. The main competitor of the HEI is Uzhhorod National University (hereafter referred to as UNU), a much larger public university located in the same city and oblast. For comparison, the HEI has less than 1,000 students in total, compared to about 15,000 at UNU. The tuition at the HEI is about €1,000 compared to some €3,000 at UNU. In the law programs, the HEI admits 50+40 for the Bachelor and 30 students into the Master Program (reduced to 20 as of 2021), while Uzhhorod National University admits about 200 in the Master Program alone.

Overall, there are some 193 academic institutions in Ukraine offering Bachelor programs in law and about 120 offering Master programs in law. Given that the overall population of Ukraine is around 45 million, it is safe to say that the market is over-saturated and that a significant number of the academic programs in law will have to merge or close in coming years. This is confirmed by the fact that Ukraine currently has about 53,000 attorneys and 8,000 judges, while the combined student enrollment in all law programs in Ukraine was over 100,000 in 2019. On the basis of these numbers, it is safe to say that the large majority of current law students in Ukraine will not practice law as attorneys and will not get jobs that actually require a law license but will be working in the public administration, law enforcement, private enterprise, and other professions where legal education may be a benefit but not necessarily a requirement.

At the HEI, law at the bachelor level was offered from 2006 under a license to admit 50 students to full-time education. In 2010, an additional license for 40 persons in distance or correspondence studies was obtained, bringing the annual enrollment capacity to 90 persons. The program was evaluated by the Ministry of Education in 2006 and 2010, when the licenses were given, and in 2009 and 2014.

After some changes in the Ukrainian Law on Higher Education, the law program was recast as a Bachelor program in “Law and Human Rights Activity” in 2017 (hereafter referred to as study program, bachelor program). The current assessment is the first time the recast program is being evaluated externally.

### 1.4. The Expert Panel

The Review team was completed according to *Description of experts’ recruitment and organization of experts’ work*, approved by order No. V-149, 31 Dec. 2019, of Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The site visit to the HEI using online technologies was conducted by the expert panel on 13 April 2021.

The Expert Team consisted of the following members:

- **Prof. Dr. iur. Frank Emmert LL.M., FCIArb**, Professor of International, Comparative and European Union Law, Consultant & Arbitrator, Indiana University School of Law, USA;
- **Prof. Dr. Maria del Mar Campins Eritja**, Full Professor at Universitat de Barcelona, Faculty of Law, Spain;
- **Assoc. Prof. Tomas Bagdanskis**, lecturer (Business and Labour Law) at ISM University of Management and Economics, associate professor (Labour Law) at Vilnius University, Founder and Managing Partner at ILAW Professional Law Partnership, Lithuania;
- **Ms. Agnė Oseckytė**, doctoral student at Lunds Universitet, Faculty of Law, Sweden.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

*The programme objective(s) and intended fields of learning outcomes shall be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:*

- *programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible;*
- *programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market;*
- *programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered;*
- *the name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.*

The Expert Team found that the study program complies with the legal requirements for Bachelor in law studies in Ukraine. The aim of the program is “providing higher education applicants with theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and abilities on the general principles of practical legal activity, other competencies in the specialty 081 Law, sufficient for the effective performance of tasks of the appropriate stage of professional activity” with a practical orientation.

The Bachelor program seems to be reasonably structured with regard to the study program’s aims and learning outcomes. It covers different traditional areas of competence, including knowledge competences, cognitive competences, and practical competences. However, the Expert Team found some confusion in the SER about student-centered learning as well as about competences versus learning outcomes, as if the HEI was unfamiliar with these concepts. This confusion seems to manifest itself also on the website of the HEI, which may impact the public accessibility of the relevant information. However, the Expert Team acknowledges that some of the lack of clarity could be due to difficulties with translation.

The intended learning outcomes of the program are defined according to the Standard of Higher Education on specialty 081 "Law" and the Law of Ukraine on the Bar and Legal Practice, but the Expert Team was not able to assess, on the basis of the information submitted, how they are achieved through the program. In spite of the fact that the stated learning outcomes seem to be consistent with the level of legal studies, it would be useful to distinguish generic/subject-specific competences, and acquired competences/expected results.

In the SER, the HEI claims that “The focus of the educational program is to form the competencies necessary to protect human and civil rights as the most important value on earth and society, to be committed to the principles of human dignity and professional ethics, justice, impartiality, empathy and adherence to high moral standards. The program is based on modern knowledge of legislation and regulatory and instructional materials in the branch of jurisprudence; modern ideas about trends, patterns of scientific development. The program provides integration of professional training in the branch of law with innovative, practical and research activities.”

While the Bachelor program provides the basic elements of a legal studies program, the focus on “protection of human and civil rights” (reflecting the program title “Law and Human Rights Activities”) is not sufficiently visible. The curriculum does not have a particularly strong civil and political rights component. There seem to be only a couple of optional subjects. Nor is it clear from the content of the various compulsory subjects that human rights are a priority focus.

The absence of a strong human rights component is confirmed by the stated goals of the Bachelor program. Pursuant to the Educational Program approved by the HEI (Document #4 “Education Program Bachelor”), the Bachelor degree, Speciality: 081 Law “consists in the

formation of competencies necessary for students to understand the nature and functions of law, the content of theoretical principles (doctrines), principles and basic legal institutions, application of law, as well as the limits of legal regulation of various social relations.” This programming statement is consistent with a general law program at the Bachelor level and does not indicate a particular focus on civil or human rights.

Furthermore, although the HEI is virtually in walking distance from the EU external border and several of its students and graduates have participated in student exchanges in the EU, practice placements, or other activities in and with EU partners, the Bachelor program is almost entirely focused on Ukrainian national law. Two smaller courses are obligatory - “Constitutional Law of Foreign Countries” and “History of State and Law of Foreign Countries” – and seem to take a very theoretical and “old fashioned” approach, rather than catering to the prospective professional needs of the graduates, for example with regard to trading in and with the EU. One elective subject is supposed to cover “International Law”, “International Litigation” and “Fundamentals of the Law of the European Court” in 5 ECTS. The Expert Team was not able, on the basis of the information submitted, to determine which European Court was covered by that course. Beyond that, there are no offerings for international or European Union law.

The theoretical and abstract approach is not only reflected in course names such as “History of the Doctrines of State and Law” (3 ECTS), “Theory of State and Law” (12 ECTS) and “History of the State and Law in Ukraine” (6 ECTS). There does not seem to be any focus on practical, social and communication skills and competences. Contrary to best practice standards at most law schools in the 21st century, there do not seem to be any course offerings in legal or persuasive writing and argumentation. Although there is supposedly a legal clinic, it does not feature in the curriculum of the Bachelor program and the Expert Team was not able, on the basis of the information submitted, to verify whether the Legal Clinic exists, is accessible to interested students, and whether it provides quality clinical education in law.

In general, the Expert Team feels that the label “Law and Human Rights Activity” is not merited and the program should be marketed as a general bachelor program in law instead.

After the completion of the study program, students are expected to be able to work independently “in state executive and judicial authorities, local governments, prosecutor's office, advocacy, the Security Service of Ukraine, departments of internal affairs, customs, legal services of enterprises, institutions, organizations, etc” (SER). The HEI should clarify that the respective professional activities are at the level of clerical and administrative staff. It seems that only 20-30% of the Bachelor graduates continue their education in Master studies to become fully qualified lawyers (many of them at other universities) and that many of the Bachelor graduates will be employed in law enforcement activities, which probably mostly covers police officers and prison guards (around 20%) or clerical positions in the public service (around 15%). These job market realities should be transparent for potential students from visits to the website of the HEI.

Furthermore, the Expert Team found literally no indication in the curriculum and other practical aspects of the delivery of the Bachelor program for “modern knowledge”, “modern ideas about trends, patterns of scientific development” and “innovative, practical and research activities.” While the present realities at the HEI seem underwhelming and dated, neither the SER nor the conversations during the site visit demonstrated any kind of systematic approach to institutional planning for academic development and continuous updating of the program aims and learning outcomes.

Overall, the Expert Team finds the program aims and learning outcomes to be conforming with the minimum standards required under Ukrainian law and the general expectations for a Bachelor program in law. That being said, the program aims and learning outcomes should be more clearly distinguished and more clearly communicated. Furthermore, the HEI is encouraged

to be more ambitious with its program aims and learning outcomes, in particular given the geographic location of the HEI on the doorsteps of the EU and given the declared focus on human rights.

## 2.2. Curriculum design

*The field of the programme structure shall be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:*

- *study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive;*
- *the content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies;*
- *the content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes;*
- *the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes;*
- *the content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies.*

In addition to the remarks already made with regard to program aims and learning outcomes, the Expert Team was not impressed with the structure of the curriculum. The curriculum seems to be front-loaded with too many theoretical subjects of limited relevance for a law program, including “Ukrainian Language”, “History of Ukraine”, and “History of Ukrainian Culture”. On the other hand, “Legal Deontology” would not seem to be a good fit for first semester students in a Bachelor program. After the first year, the curriculum becomes more conventional and does seem to cover all the essential subjects.

Overall, the curriculum follows the statist models of the Soviet days with its focus on public law (more than 100 ECTS, including criminal law) and a relative neglect of private and commercial law, where the new and better paid jobs for future lawyers tend to be (about 70 ECTS). There is simply no reflection in the curriculum of a quest for “modern ideas about trends, patterns of scientific development” or “innovative, practical and research activities.” Quite to the contrary, the HEI should study best practice examples of curriculum development of leading law schools in the region and seek other external and international input to unshackle itself from the Soviet past and the outdated practices of peer institutions in Ukraine to become a leader rather than a follower in the development of a modern, student- and market-oriented curriculum.

That being said, the program structure, content and scope follow the Ukrainian laws on Higher Education in general and Legal Science (Law) of 2004 in particular. The list of mandatory subjects may well be common to the current programs in all Ukrainian university programs in law. It seems that universities can only offer their students choices with regard to optional subjects. If this is indeed the case, neither the antiquated names nor the less than ideal structure can be blamed on the HEI.

According to the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education, students have, for the first time, the right to “choose subjects provided by the appropriate educational program and work curriculum, in an amount of not less than 25 percent of ECTS credits provided for this level of higher education. In accordance with this requirement, the HEI offers a number of “elective subjects”. However, the Expert Team was not able to understand to what extent the students are actually given choices. 178 ECTS seem to be prescribed by the HEI and/or Ukrainian law, while 48 ECTS are listed as “elective subjects” and 14 ECTS are listed as “disciplines of other specialties of free choice of the student”. The list of “elective subjects” only comprises 48 ECTS, however, which seems to suggest that the “election” was done by the HEI and there are no actual choices for the students because they need 48 ECTS and there are only subjects for 48 ECTS to choose from. The table provided by the HEI (Document #5 “Curriculum Bachelor”) is also unclear with regard to when some of the elective subjects are actually offered. Course numbers 2.2.4 (International Law,



International Litigation, Fundamentals of the Law of the European Court), as well as 2.2.13 (Protection of Personal Non-Property Rights, Operational Search Activity) are listed with ECTS but are not listed in the semester schedule. Finally, the Expert Team was not provided with examples for the courses available to the students under “disciplines of other specialties of free choice of the student”.

Even taking account of the limitations imposed by Ukrainian law, the curriculum does not adequately reflect the declared focus on “law and human rights activity”. The elective subjects seem scattershot, with offerings more dependent on who is available to teach what than on the declared aims and topic of the degree program. Indeed, one could argue that there is a greater focus on subjects OTHER than human rights. For example, “customs law”, “commercial law”, “information law”, “finance law”, “legal principles of business security”, “tax law”, as well as “banking and insurance law”, suggest a focus on business law. Even canon law shows up with four listings (“Canonical and legal status of churches and religious organizations in Ukraine”, “Canonical and legal aspects of interfaith relations in Ukraine”, “Church law”, and “Canonical law”), while human rights are featuring only twice in the list of elective courses (“Constitutional protection of human rights”, and “Fundamentals of the law of the European Court”, assuming that the latter is a reference to the European Court of Human Rights). The Expert Team was not able to avoid the impression that the label “human rights” was chosen more for marketing purposes than as a reflection of actual strengths of the program. A switch from Soviet style central planning to student centred learning is not discernible.

In light of the fact that a rather large percentage of the graduates seem to end up in law enforcement, presumably including police work and prison service, a program labelled “law and human rights activity” should at the very least offer elective courses on “prisoner rights” and on “civil/human rights and police accountability”. Neither of these subjects are currently offered and the Expert Team was not provided information showing that at least some of the issues were covered in other courses. Unsurprisingly, cutting edge 21st century human rights issues such as “internet law”, “privacy and data protection”, let alone the “protection of vulnerable groups”, or “human rights, sustainability and environmental law”, are completely absent from the curriculum. This reinforces the impression of the Expert Team that the curriculum does not reflect *the latest achievements in science, art and technologies*.

The Rector informed the Expert Team that the HEI is the only university in Ukraine offering canon law in a way that enables the graduates to work as legal counsel for religious organizations. While there may not be a sufficiently large market to offer this as a degree program instead of human rights and law, the HEI should at least explore options of marketing canon law as one of its strengths.

### **2.3. Teaching staff**

*The teaching staff shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:*

- *the qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes;*
- *the number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes;*
- *teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme;*
- *the higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme;*
- *the teaching staff of the programme is involved in research (art) directly related to the study programme being reviewed.*

The Expert Team was provided with a document entitled “Project - The Concept of Legal Education Development”. This seems to be a document propagated by the Ministry of Higher Education in Ukraine. The documents postulate the following “strategic goals”:

Strategic goal 1. The system and structure of legal training is optimized and meets modern international and European standards.

Strategic goal 2. The system of competitive admission to law schools provides selection of motivated and trained people.

Strategic goal 3. Educational programs of law schools provide high quality training of a lawyer.

Strategic goal 4. The state controls the quality of learning outcomes in law schools through the effectiveness of the external quality assurance system of higher legal education.

Strategic goal 5. Law schools ensure that higher legal education students acquire a high level of applied practical skills.

Unfortunately, the Expert Team was not provided with concrete examples how the HEI is seeking to systematically pursue these goals.

Between the first contacts with the HEI based on the SER, a back-and-forth of questions before and during the site visit, and documents submitted after the site visit at the insistence of the Expert Team, there were some difficulties with determining who is actually a member of the faculty of the HEI full time, part time, adjunct, or otherwise. The SER suggests in one place that the faculty is composed of 25 members. In another, the number is 12 persons, all of whom seemed to be affiliated with the canon law department. Only 6 faculty CVs were originally provided.

In the end, the Expert Team was given more or less expansive CVs of 12 faculty members and the findings are based on the assumption that these are the 12 individuals currently and actually teaching law subjects in the Bachelor program.

An evaluation of the qualifications and teaching assignments of these faculty members shows that many of them are teaching a wide range of subjects almost all across the entire curriculum.

For example, the head of the canon law department is listed as teaching “Judicial and law-enforcement bodies”, “Litigation in commercial courts”, “Economic law”, as well as “Agrarian and land law” in the Bachelor program and, in addition, “Current issues of commercial law and commercial proceedings (case law)”, “Advocacy”, “Arbitration proceedings”, “Legal bases of activity of judicial system and prosecutor's office”, as well as “Legal bases of activity of law enforcement bodies” in the Master program. Canon law, by contrast, is absent from his areas of teaching.

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While other faculty members are not quite so widely active, it became quite clear to the Expert Team that the HEI is trying to cover too much ground with too few instructors. According to the SER, some 62 courses are being offered to the students in the Bachelor program in the course of their 4 years of studies. Since the HEI is admitting new students into the program on an annual basis, it means that the same 62 courses have to be offered every year, one quarter to the first year students, one quarter to the second year students, and so forth. In plain English, this means that each of the 12 faculty members has to teach at least 5 different courses per year just in the Bachelor program. If we add the 16 or so courses in the Master program, which also fall into the responsibilities of the same faculty members, the individual course load rises to almost 7 different courses per year. In terms of contact hours, the faculty is engaged in lectures and

seminar meetings with students for a total of 2892 hours in the Bachelor program and 764 hours in the Master program every year. With the breakdown into semesters, this means that each and every faculty member, on average, has to spend about 12 hours per week in class with the students. This is obviously in addition to class preparation, exam preparation and grading, individual student meetings and office hours, plus any institutional service and academic research.

As a consequence, many of the faculty members will be struggling to keep up with the latest developments in their many fields of activity. They will be forced to recycle their notes and materials and will have limited time and energy to think about institutional development and self-improvement.

According to the SER, professors are only required to update the list of literature, clarify the chapters of the course, introduce new information into the contents of the course, etc, once every 2 years. In light of the very high workload, the members of the Expert Team do not believe that the teaching staff is even able to do it every 2 years, although this should be a constant feature of the instructional process.

This overextended situation explains at least in part why the program aims and the curricular structure have not been reformed more and why lofty goals expressed in the SER and other documents have not really been implemented in practice.

The situation does not get any better from the fact that the HEI does not seem to have a systematic and ongoing approach toward assessing and developing the teaching methodology of the faculty members or even ensuring that state-of-the-art materials are used and knowledge is imparted. This was also apparent after the conversation with the students. In spite of repeated inquiries in writing prior to the site visit and orally during the site visit, the Expert Team was not giving sufficient information to make an affirmative decision that the HEI creates sufficiently good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff as it would be necessary for the sustainable delivery of the program. The Expert Team came to the conclusion that there is simply no time for much self-reflection and self-improvement, neither at the institutional, nor at the individual level.

In addition to the teaching obligations, the faculty members are supposed to engage in research and to publish their research results. The majority of the faculty members are indeed quite active and do publish at least occasionally. The publication record of some faculty members is even impressive. However, upon closer look, many of the publications are placed in the in-house academic journal of the HEI or otherwise published in book format by the HEI itself. This does not conform to international best practice standards for academic research because there is no independent or peer review or external quality assurance.

The same problem of self-referential structures appeared in at least some of the practice placements of the student. The Expert Team already mentioned that many students do their internships at Silverland Law Firm, conveniently founded and owned by the Rector of the HEI. Silverland also becomes a significant employer after graduation. Other important practice placements are with notaries and attorneys who are also on the list of faculty. Even faculty recruitment is somewhat self-referential. One person graduated from the HEI Master program in 2019 and was hired as a teacher for the HEI Bachelor program in February of 2020. 6 of the 12 faculty members are graduates of Uzhhorod State University and another 2 are graduates of the HEI itself. Only 6 of the 12 faculty members are listing teaching experience at any university other than the HEI on their CVs!

One of the most striking features of the faculty was the fact that not one of the 12 faculty members is female and even the last hiring process in 2020 added yet another male instructor to the faculty. This is not only surprising for a modern institution of higher education, it is completely unacceptable for a program that actually carries the name “human rights” in its very

title. Although the faculty is clearly short staffed for the wide range of courses that have to be taught on a regular basis, all the HEI was willing and able to do about this in recent years was to hire yet another male graduate to join the faculty and teach a majority of female students. The Expert Team very strongly urges the HEI to diversify its faculty with regard to gender, as well as educational background and professional experience, to bring more diverse viewpoints and experiences to the educational programming! The Expert Team strongly encourages future assessment teams to deny any further accreditations to the HEI unless actual steps toward achieving an appropriate gender balance have been taken.

Overall, the Expert Team got the impression that the HEI cannot simultaneously provide the fundamentals of a Bachelor program in law and a satisfactory level of specialization in human rights with its current resources. To develop a program in human rights that is more than a token expression of a fashionable subject, and to make the program more relevant to the professional needs of the graduates, subjects such as “civil/human rights and police accountability”, as well as “human rights in prisons” should be added as required or highly recommended courses. Additional time and effort will be needed to address contemporary challenges with freedom of speech on the internet, privacy and data protection, as well as sustainable development. This cannot be done without an expansion of the teaching staff.

As a medium-term strategic goal, the number of different subjects taught by a faculty member should also be reduced to no more than 2 to 3 specializations.

#### ***2.4. Facilities and learning resources***

*Facilities and learning resources shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:*

- *the premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality;*
- *the teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are adequate both in size and quality;*
- *the higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice;*
- *teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible.*

The Expert Team was provided with photographs and video footage of the premises, including library stacks and work spaces, teaching rooms, meeting rooms, corridors, canteen, gyms, outdoor spaces etc. The University has 45 academic classrooms, a large assembly hall with 120 seats, a small assembly hall with 70 seats, two computer classrooms, research laboratories, and a chapel. The premises appear adequate in size and quality.

Staff and students seemed satisfied with the number and quality of the IT equipment available to them. However, some IT machines are old and should be replaced as soon as possible. Also, there should be more space for the researchers and teachers to work without other people being present in the space (individual work spaces).

The students in the Bachelor program have to spend 4 weeks in practical training during the 4th semester and 8 weeks during the 8th semester. During the practice placement, students are supposedly being supervised by a faculty or staff member of the University and a supervisor at the placement institution. The HEI provided the Expert Team with a list of partner institutions where the students can carry out their practice. The listed institutions have partnership agreements with the University and are also social partners and employers of alumni. It seems that the collaboration with the law firms, notary offices, corporations, and government agencies works well and provides a pathway to employment upon graduation. Students also have the right to choose their own placements and the HEI has entered into ad hoc agreements with non-listed placement providers to facilitate these student preferences. However, the Expert Team was not provided with representative information about the actual work done by students during the

practice placements, the evaluation or assessment of their performance, and any procedures of feedback or evaluation of the quality of the placement.

According to the SER for the Bachelor program, students have 10 ECTS credits of practical training. It takes place in the 4th semester (4 ECTS for 4 weeks) and the 8th semester (6 ECTS for 6 weeks). According to the SER, “The task of the practical training is mastering and improving of professional competencies, consolidation of theoretical material with judicial practice, at the same time improving language skills (Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, German, Polish, Romani, etc.) and communication competencies in the specialty.” According to the annexes, the university has a total of 10 social partners to place all Bachelor and Master students. From the meetings, the Expert Team understood that all students were able to do their internships and, in fact, the employers seemed very happy with the students from the university and praised their experience in hosting them. The Expert Team also learned that students who wanted to do an internship in institutions or law firms other than the ten partners of the university were able to do so without problems. However, the Expert Team was not able to find out, on the basis of the documents provided, what kind of tasks the Bachelor students are performing during the internship periods, nor how the activities are supervised and assessed. During the site visit, the Expert Team was merely told that each student must submit a report on their practical experience in placement, but no further details could be provided. Also, a significant number of students were doing their internships at “Silverland Law Firm”, which was founded and continues to be owned or co-owned by the Rector of the HEI. Future assessment teams able to make an actual site visit, rather than a virtual one, should visit this law firm and ensure that it is sufficiently distinct from the HEI and provides real services to real clients and gives the students real work experience.

While a number of international practice possibilities were mentioned in the SER and accompanying documents, the Expert Team concluded that no more than a handful of students have the necessary language skills to undertake meaningful professional activities in a foreign environment. Language instruction offered at the University seems to be focused on basic communication skills, while instruction in legal English and the legal language equivalent in other languages does not seem to be available.

Students listed the practical experience as one of the best parts of the program. Therefore, the HEI should consider expanding practical training opportunities both in size and scope and by adding a bigger variety of institutions. Furthermore, practical skills should be integrated in a range of courses that are currently presented mostly as frontal lectures.

As stated already above, the Expert Team saw a legal clinic in the SER but could not verify, on the basis of the documents submitted, what the clinic does, how it is organized, what students can and cannot do with live clients, and at what point in time it is integrated into the curriculum. There is a course “Advocacy Practice” being offered for 2 hours/week in the 6th semester but the Expert Team does not believe that the students could do meaningful clinical work in that time frame. This will be another point of inquiry for the next assessment team.

During the site visit, the Expert Team made a virtual visit to the library. At first glance, the facility seemed to have a reasonably large collection of materials. However, upon closer inspection, it quickly became apparent that the scope and depth of the collection is embarrassingly limited. The University provides the students with the textbooks required in the different classes. These are taken from the library collection and have to be returned at the end of the semester. The Expert Team was not able to determine how many of the 20’000 volumes in the library consist of such multi-copy textbook stacks, nor how up to date – or out of date – these materials are.

When the Expert Team asked the librarian to show the collection of human rights law, the librarian was barely able to show 3 or 4 books on the subject, none of them in languages other than Ukrainian or Russian.

The Expert Team is aware of the difficulty of providing up to date textbooks and research materials for the students, including international journals and monographs, but encourages the University to develop this critical part of the collection in a way that enables students to work with current statutory and case law and state-of-the-art science and doctrine.

The University emphasized the availability of various electronic resources, including databases and books. It makes sense for institutions of higher education to shift their library collections increasingly into electronic access materials, in particular in a country like Ukraine, where funds for expensive books are limited and even shipment of physical collections from international publishers is a challenge. However, on the list of databases available to the students, the Expert Team saw only national resources. Even free international resources such as SSRN, Academia.edu or ResearchGate were not listed, although they give free online access to thousands of publications in the areas of activity of the HEI.

The Expert Team did not get sufficient information to determine whether the librarian(s) at the University are sufficiently knowledgeable to provide support to the students and teaching- and research staff with regard to freely accessible international resources, as basic as Google Scholar, or the databases of the European Union (EurLex and InfoCuria) and the Council of Europe (HUDOC), let alone fee-based resources like HeinOnline, Beck-Online, JStor, EBSCO, and the like.

The HEI seems to rely on the V. Vernadskii National Library in Kyiv as an important additional resource for the students and teaching- and research staff. The HEI has an agreement with this library to allow student access to online resources. However, the list of online resources provided in the SER contains mostly general sources, such as language learning resources. The most significant online resource listed in the SER is the Gale OneFile database. While the SER claims that the “42 million English-language journal articles since 1980” cover also “law”, a closer look at OneFile shows that the subjects cover “Business & Economics, Health & Medicine, Media & Fine Arts, Criminal Justice, Literature, Drama, Political Science & Diplomatic Studies, Science & Technology, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Psychology, and U.S. History.” There is no general focus on law and no systematic coverage of human rights law, or international and comparative law. Even just a few minutes of searches on OneFile showed that important journals like the American Journal of Comparative Law, American Journal of International Law, European Journal of International Law, European Journal of Law Reform, Hague Journal on the Rule of Law, International Human Rights Law Review, or the Oxford Human Rights Law Review are missing. On the other hand, the database does include journals like the Asia-Pacific Journal of Human Rights and the Law, the Asian Journal of Comparative Law, the Harvard International Law Journal, the International and Comparative Law Quarterly, and many others. As a result, the OneFile database is not ideal but it does provide the students with broad access to many international publications, including many important law journals and law reviews. The remaining question is whether the students can make effective use of this access or whether the procedures are too cumbersome or slow or the students and teaching- and research staff simply lack the necessary research skills.

After the meeting with teaching staff and students, the Expert Team remained unconvinced that faculty, staff, and students were actually able to use international sources in their research and class preparation.

Without having conclusive information on the matter, the Expert Team recommends that the University should provide more information about access to free online databases, and provide both students and teaching- and research staff with digital literacy courses.



## ***2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment***

*The process of studies and assessment thereof shall be carried out in accordance with the following criteria:*

- *the admission requirements are well-founded;*
- *the organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes;*
- *students are encouraged to participate in research, artistic and experimental development activities;*
- *students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes;*
- *the higher education institution ensures an adequate level of academic and social support;*
- *the assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available;*
- *professional activities of the majority of graduates meets the programme providers' expectations.*

The Expert Team was not provided with sufficient information to determine whether admission to the HEI is competitive. The Expert Team got the impression that students choose this HEI mostly because of its location close to their homes and/or work places. The Expert Team was also told that the HEI fulfils an important social and economic function in the region by providing educational opportunities to lower income families. However, word-of-mouth recommendations by current and former students also seem to play a significant role. Overall, the Expert Team came to conclude that there is a high degree of satisfaction with the institution and its programs among current and former students and a high level of loyalty also from the side of social partners and employers.

The Expert Team refers to its previous remarks about curriculum structure and focus with regard to some of the weaknesses of the study program and process.

According to the SER, the students were able to participate in 3 international research projects in recent years on topics such as refugee and migrant rights, rights of people with disabilities, and protection of socially vulnerable groups. However, the Expert Team was not provided with detailed information to assess how many students were able to participate in these projects and whether students are generally encouraged to participate in research, artistic and experimental development activities, although the HEI also seems to organize multiple academic conferences and events every year in which at least some of the students can play an active role.

A small number of students have had the opportunity of participating in student mobility programs, including exchange opportunities in a number of EU Member States. The Expert Team was not provided with sufficient information to determine whether these kind of placement opportunities are sufficiently available to all interested students.

To the extent the Expert Team was able to assess, the HEI ensures an adequate level of academic and social support. The students and graduates who met with the Expert Team certainly expressed their satisfaction with the available support.

From what the Expert Team could determine, the assessment of student performance in the classroom-based courses seems to be adequate. However, the Expert Team was not provided with sufficient information to determine whether the assessment system is sufficiently transparent and publicly available. The website of the HEI, as the main source of public information, was not clear with regard to program aims and learning outcomes and how they would be achieved and how the achievements would be assessed in an objective and scientific manner.

Neither the SER nor the meetings with the administrators and teaching staff clarified for the Expert Team how the university assesses the practical training (including training of different nature) and the performance of individual student tasks during the practical training. The students and social partners generally talked about practical training, not identifying specific benefits and challenges they face.

## **2.6. Programme management**

*Programme management should be evaluated according to the following criteria:*

- *responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated;*
- *information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed;*
- *the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme;*
- *the evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders;*
- *the internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient.*

According to the SER, the responsibilities for management decisions are divided between the Rector, who is also listed as “the owner” of the HEI in the SER, the educational department, the dean’s office, the “profile department”, and the “guarantor of the educational program”. There is also a student council and a scientific society of postgraduate students. Interestingly, the SER does not mention the Academic Council in this context.

In another place, the SER states that “the collegial governing body of the University is the Academic Council” and makes references in various contexts to decisions and programs that were discussed and/or approved by the Academic Council.

The Expert Team was not provided with sufficient information to determine the exact division of responsibilities of the Rector/Owner and Dean on the one side and the Academic Council on the other. However, since only 25% or 7 of the 28 members of the Academic Council seem to be elected by the faculty, staff or students, and the remaining 75% or 21 members are on the Council based on their positions or by appointment, it probably does not make much of a difference.

The impression of the Expert Team that the Rector/Owner is running a tight ship was confirmed in various meetings during the site visit. The fact that none of the staff or faculty members had any critical remarks or complaints about the HEI could, at least in theory, be attributed to the University doing a great job in its educational mission and in taking care of its community. However, if not one single student in a group of about 10 has anything to say other than the claim that everything is perfect, nothing could be better, the library has everything they need, nothing should be changed or improved, and everyone would recommend the HEI to their family and friends, the Expert Team has to come to the conclusion that either the group was carefully selected and monitored or the HEI has not fostered an atmosphere of critical thinking and open dialogue.

The Expert Team is willing to give the benefit of the doubt to the HEI this time but the Expert Team would strongly encourage future assessment teams to ensure that the fundamental human right of freedom of speech is respected in the meeting with the various stakeholders.

That being said, the Expert Team got the impression that the students are passive recipients of the programmatic decisions made at the HEI and are not taking an active role in the development of the curriculum and other decisions of direct concern to them. Nor did the students at the meetings show any expectations in this regard.



In combination, the lack of critical opinions and the apparent lack of participatory procedures involving the students takes the Expert Team back to earlier findings according to which much of the HEI is still stuck in Soviet-style approaches. The idea of a liberal education and the formation of critical thinking as a paramount benefit of higher education has to be implemented more systematically at the HEI.

With regard to data collection, analysis, internal and external evaluations, and quality assurance, the SER makes a number of fairly abstract statements and claims.

According to the SER, “Admission of students to the EP Law of the first (bachelor) stage of higher education is carried out in accordance with the legal acts, orders, and letters of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.” In addition to “full or general secondary education”, the HEI requires three certificates in Ukrainian language and literature, history of Ukraine, mathematics or foreign language with a minimum score of 124. The Expert Team is not able to assess whether this is a low or an average or a high bar for admission, for example compared to Uzhhorod National University.

During the study program, the students have to pass exams and submit various types of papers and other assignments to obtain credit for the courses taken. Most tests and exams can be re-taken if necessary. Before the final degree is certified, the students have to pass a cumulative exam covering “Theory of State and Law”, “Criminal Law”, “Criminal Procedure”, “Family Law”, and “Civil Procedure.” A graduate thesis is not required in the Bachelor program.

The subjects tested on the final cumulative exam reconfirm the earlier finding that the program is emphasizing public law subjects at the expense of civil and commercial law subjects. Unsurprisingly, the alleged focus on human rights is also not part of the final exams.

The SER also contains some language about academic integrity but once again this remains on a rather abstract and theoretical level. However, it seems that the HEI is providing the necessary instruction about academic integrity and the consequences of violations and uses software that supports Ukrainian language review (Advego Plagiatus and Plagamme). The Expert Team was not able to review student papers and check references and run its own plagiarism checks.

The SER further states that “The university has a feedback system with all stakeholders. There is a WEB-page on the university's website, where every person can comment on the ... organization of the educational process and educational and methodological support. The university maintains constant relations with graduates. ... Suggestions for improving the educational program are made by employers, as well as practical leaders.” Several examples are also provided where suggestions were made by these stakeholders and taken up by the HEI.

The SER outlines that “The university has a system of internal quality assurance of education, which provides: a) Monitoring and regular analysis of curricula, mechanisms for updating and improving the contents of the educational program (list of subjects of compulsory and elective components), ensuring the attractiveness of the educational program (academic mobility program, "Double Diploma", "School in Europe"), support constant contacts with stakeholders, social partners, enterprises and institutions of the region. b) The university has a clear procedure for adherence to academic integrity and professional ethics. ... c) The university has a clear, understandable and transparent system of evaluation of students' knowledge. ... d) Ensuring the optimal training staff, which includes: - procedures for selection and appointment of specialists in accordance with the level of professional and scientific competence; - procedures for professional development and improvement of professional skills of educational specialists; - regulation and use of procedures for dismissal of persons who have shown professional incapacity; - involvement of practitioners in training process. e) Information systems and publicity. The university has its own website, which is regularly updated. An objective index of the quality of education is the including of the university to informational websites (Unified State Electronic Database on Education, “Osvita.ua.”, e-systems: “Vstup.edbo.gov.ua”, “IC

Конкурс”), that reflects an adequate indicators of data on the university, its educational resources and activity. The monitoring mission on compliance with the procedures of internal assurance of qualitative education is entrusted to the Academic Council of the University, which in accordance with its main tasks provides control over activity of the University. Conclusion. The implemented management system on education quality is aimed at ensuring the provision of high quality educational services and training of competitive specialists, the university administration is working on further development and improvement of the quality of management processes at the university.”

While this language does tick most of the right boxes, the Expert Team was not able to detect much application of these principles and procedures in the daily practice of the HEI. If these systems were really in place and working, it would be hard to understand why the curriculum remains dated, the focus on human rights is poorly reflected in the program, the sequencing of the courses is less than ideal, etc. Also, the website of the HEI is quite basic and certainly does not provide as much information as it could and should, at least as far as the English language version is concerned.

In this regard, the Expert Team got the impression that program management, quality assurance, and self-improvement do not seem to be priorities of the university, and it neither devotes sufficient time nor specific human or financial resources to self-reflection and -improvement. Along the same lines, the HEI does not seem to utilize or involve the different stakeholders in this process. The lack of a real emphasis on human rights is just one of the most visible consequences of this.

The Expert Team concludes that the HEI seems to be in compliance with its obligations under Ukrainian law with regard to program management and quality assurance. However, the Expert Team does not have confidence that the HEI uses enough internal and external evaluations and quality assurance measures or at least does not use them as effectively as it should. Indeed, the Expert Team does not have much confidence that the HEI is going to be able to respond to the recommendations in the present evaluation and launch the necessary reforms unless it implements a cultural shift away from centralized control to more collaborative decision-making, encourages all stakeholders to speak openly and critically, and reduces its self-referential or closed-loop feedback circles by bringing in external voices and expertise.

## 2.7. Examples of excellence\*

\* if there are any to be shared as a good practice

Core definition: Excellence means exhibiting characteristics that are very good and, implicitly, not achievable by all.

Explanatory context Excellence enshrines one meaning of quality: a traditional view that associates quality with the exceptional.

To the extent the Expert Team was able to detect, the strongest features of the bachelor program in law - and the institutional structures that deliver it - are the following:

The bachelor program is accessible to local students who are not able to go elsewhere in Ukraine to study and, in particular, to lower income students who cannot afford the higher fees of other institutions of higher education. While this also limits the financial resources and, therefore, the ability of the HEI to deliver its programs at the highest level of quality, the HEI is encouraged to continue its affordable local programming as far as possible.

The HEI is comparatively small and is making good use of its more limited size by providing a more personalized educational experience and making the students feel well-taken care of. The Expert Team was impressed with the high degree of loyalty to the HEI expressed by all stakeholders, both within the HEI and among the group of employers and other social partners. This is a reflection of the team spirit and perception of belonging conveyed to the students. The HEI is encouraged to maintain its personal and caring approach to the educational process.

Last but not least, the Expert Team gained the impression that the social partners and employers of graduates of the HEI were very satisfied with their qualifications and work ethic. While this does not necessarily mean that the students were provided with the best possible education, it does suggest that they were given what they need to be able to perform in the kind of jobs they are likely to find locally, for example in the public administration, the police and other law enforcement services, small and medium size enterprises, etc. The HEI is encouraged to maintain close relationships with its social partners to ensure as much as possible that reforms toward a state-of-the-art education in national and international comparison will not come at the expense of the professional and personal qualities that are most appreciated in the local job market.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS\*

#### 1. *Programme aims and learning outcomes*

Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University (“the HEI”), is recommended to reconsider its programme objectives with a view towards addressing and/or improving:

(a) the links between the programme objectives and the overarching role (mission) the HEI as an institution of higher education with a limited regional role, in particular with regard to

- many of the graduates finding employment in law enforcement or in the public administration,
- increasing professional and economic opportunities in neighboring EU Member States.

(b) the declared focus of the program on human rights, which must become more than a lofty goal and needs to be reflected across the entire curriculum and enriched with more current issues in human rights.

The HEI needs to become more responsive to changes in the market and the needs of the contemporary legal profession. The HEI has to carefully monitor to what extent its program aims and learning outcomes serve the graduates well in the regional labor market and has to have mechanisms that allow it to plan several years into the future to make sure that students starting today will be optimally qualified and practice ready 5 years down the line.

In general, the HEI has to become more self-critical and nimble at implementing reforms. A modern institution of higher education can only meet its responsibilities to the students and staff and remain competitive in the long term if it develops a culture of constant self-reflection and self-improvement. The HEI should develop a systematic program of external peer review to have fresh eyes on potential weaknesses and get anticipated reforms validated by experienced academics and university administrators with broader external perspectives. Any reform plans have to become more specific, with clear targets, deadlines, financing solutions, and implementation responsibilities.

(c) Specific recommendations:

- “Competences” vs. “learning outcomes” need to be more clearly distinguished and articulated for the program aims and on the website;
- The labor market opportunities for the graduates of the Bachelor program need to be more clearly represented in the marketing, i.e. that the majority of the graduates will not have pathways to becoming attorneys, prosecutors, judges, notaries, etc. but will be working as assistants to these legal professionals, as well as civil servants in the public administration, law enforcement, etc.
- The human rights component of the program is insufficiently developed; either, the HEI needs to drop “and human rights activity” from the program title and admit that it is offering a general bachelor in law, or the HEI needs to strengthen human and civil rights in the program to reflect a real focus on these areas of the law;
- The HEI should consider a specialization or sub-specialization that it can actually deliver, i.e. canon law;
- Given the location on the border of the EU, the HEI should strengthen its international and EU law offerings with courses such as “International Business Transactions”, “International Trade Law” and “European Union Law” or “Trading in and with the EU”.

## **2. Curriculum design**

The curriculum in the bachelor program feels dated. It does not seem to have changed much since Soviet times. The Expert Team recommends the following reforms:

- The very theoretical approach to law reflected in the first year and quite possibly the first two years needs to be modernized. The curriculum needs to better reflect what is really required for the training of lawyers at university level and what their local and regional labor market demands. The current focus on public and criminal law should be reviewed and the areas of private, commercial and international law should be strengthened.
- If the human rights dimension is to be retained in the curriculum, it should be reflected in the selection of subjects taken by students, not only in optional subjects, but also in compulsory subjects.
- Public International Law and European Human Rights Law should be compulsory subjects.
- The list of elective subjects should be expanded to give the students actual choices, i.e. there should be more than 48 ECTS offered for the 48 ECTS required for graduation. As it is, the elections are made by the administration and not by the students.
- Instead of -- or at least in addition to -- the general language courses currently on offer, the HEI should offer professional level language instruction, in particular legal English.
- The entire system of the practical training or traineeships should be monitored to make sure that the students receive state-of-the-art opportunities. At present, it is not clear whether there is sufficient oversight and quality control.
- Future assessment teams should visit the legal clinic and review whether students can work with real life clients under the competent supervision of licensed attorneys and whether best practice standards for clinical legal education are generally observed.

## **3. Teaching staff**

The HEI is offering too many subjects with too few instructors. The faculty members have to cover too many different areas and have to teach too many hours per week. This makes it hard -- if not impossible -- for the faculty members to participate meaningfully in the institutional development and to dedicate enough time to self-improvement, as well as academic research. The faculty -- and to some extent the entire university -- is also working too much like a closed loop and is largely self-referential. About half of the faculty have no experience teaching at other and larger institutions of higher education. Some have studied at the HEI and are teaching there now, without having any meaningful outside experience. The Expert Team recommends the following reforms:

- The teaching staff is too small and spread out too thin. The workload of teaching staff should be reduced, both in quantity (contact hours per week), and in quality (fewer different subject areas), to enable the faculty to be more involved in the program management and to dedicate more time to research and placement of articles and books with publishers unconnected to the HEI.
- The number of teaching staff needs to be increased. Since the current faculty is 100% male (although the student body seems to be majority female), the expansion has to bring about greater diversity with regard to gender, age, etc.
- Hiring decisions should also take into account the goal of diversifying the academic experience of the faculty members, i.e. the HEI needs to hire more faculty with significant teaching experience at other universities in Ukraine and abroad. A hiring preference should be given to candidates with PhDs from other institutions of higher education including, for example, Central European University and similar international institutions.
- To the extent these goals cannot be achieved in the short term, the HEI should bring in visiting professors and guest speakers as a regular component of the program. At least some of this can be done via online delivery. In this respect, the participation in international

programmes such as Erasmus+, as well as in programmes launched by national agencies, such as those of the DAAD in Germany, should be encouraged and strengthened.

- The HEI should provide teaching staff with support and courses to improve their pedagogical skills to add different and more engaging methods in their teaching and to adapt their teaching methods to the student-centred learning approach. The HEI should develop a systematic program for constant self-improvement of teachers and classes. For example, student evaluations should be done not only at the end of a course but students should be integrated into a feedback cycle, together with peer review and external review, on an ongoing basis.
- The HEI should require and support teaching staff in the improvement of (academic/professional) English skills and expand contacts and faculty exchange opportunities with highly ranked international universities. The lack of English proficiency amongst most senior and many junior academics is a problem for international research and scientific publications.
- The HEI is recommended to foster student-centred learning, for example by using problem-based learning approaches and inverted learning, i.e. shifting more strongly from frontal lecturing to students preparing the material through self-study and workshop-type contact lessons.
- Teaching staff should be encouraged and supported to conduct research and publish the results in national and international fora. In-house publication should be discouraged unless and until the HEI establishes a system of double-blind peer review with external reviewers for every submission.

#### **4. *Facilities and learning resources***

The university owns its facilities and seems to have overall sufficient space and decent working conditions. Nevertheless, the Expert Team recommends the following reforms:

- The library collection is very limited and focused on providing the textbooks for the classes, rather than material for additional self-study and research. To better manage with these limitations, the HEI needs to ensure top quality access to and choices in online resources. Not only the librarian(s) but also the faculty, staff, and students, should be given training to make better use of online resources.
- The IT equipment is also limited and at least some of the computers are advanced in age. The HEI needs to ensure that sufficiently fast and reliable computing resources are available to all faculty, staff and students. This is all the more important in light of the physical limitations of the library and the lack of high quality academic libraries in the city and region.
- High quality IT equipment is also important to enable the HEI to develop partnerships with other academic institutions, co-opt online conferences and courses, and generally diversify the educational offerings for its students.
- As mentioned before, the practice placements need to be better documented and supervised to ensure optimal results for the students.

#### **5. *Study process and student performance assessment***

In addition to the points already mentioned earlier in the report and in these recommendations, the Expert Team recommends the following reforms for the study process and student performance assessment:

- The HEI needs to ensure that admission criteria and procedures evolve with the evolving market situation. There are too many institutions offering law programs in Ukraine. There are currently more students enrolled in law programs at institutions of higher learning in Ukraine than there are legal professionals in the market. The job situation may not yet be critical but will become much more difficult for lawyers and it is the responsibility of the

HEI to provide potential students with a clear and honest picture of their future opportunities.

- Along with the admission criteria and procedures, the study process as a whole needs to be carefully developed to make sure that the students receive the best possible education in accordance with the “the latest achievements in science, art and technologies.”
- Instead of at least some of the very theoretical courses (“Theory of State and Law” etc.), the university should (also) focus on practical, social and communication skills and competences.
- The HEI should take better advantage of the opportunities that the law clinic can offer. The Expert Team was unable to gain sufficient information about this program component and urges future assessment teams to look into the clinic with particular care.
- Along similar lines, the HEI needs to review the whole system of traineeships and establish a clear and transparent system for their supervision.
- The HEI should formalize and systematize feedback from social partners and students regarding internships.
- Students must be provided with better opportunities for language learning at the professional level, with an emphasis on legal English. As part of this reform, the HEI should consider having visiting scholars from abroad coming to speak or even teach entire courses at the university.
- Better language training can then be used for an expansion of student mobility opportunities.
- Different methodologies should be used in the study process and, in particular, in the assessments. Although the Expert Team was not able to review actual student exams and answers, it was our impression that the exams are too theoretical. Assessments need to be done for a majority of courses with real-life case-studies and scenarios for which the students have to deliver comprehensive analysis and practical solutions.

## **6. Programme management**

In the analysis of the Expert Team, the current program management is the weakest link at the HEI and the cause of most of the other weaknesses outlined in this report. The distribution of managerial responsibilities at the HEI has remained rather unclear to the Expert Team, however, it seems that the owner and rector is not only the ultimate authority but involved in pretty much every part of the business and program management. Such a highly centralized approach is unusual for a university and contradicts the very ideals of modern higher education. Consequently, the Team is suggesting the following reforms:

- Program management responsibilities should be distinguished between business decisions (taken by the owner, rector, or department heads), and academic decisions (taken by the academic council or the faculty).
- The current top-down approach needs to be transformed rapidly and effectively to turn the HEI into a more nimble institution that allows a variety of opinions and approaches. To become a modern and competitive university, the HEI needs to reflect the ideals of liberal education and aim at producing creative thinkers rather than conforming apparatchiks.
- In this regard, the HEI needs to bring in outside experts and administrators as mentors and advisors. The Expert Team suggests formal partnerships or twinning arrangements with bigger and more advanced universities in the region, for example Central European University. The HEI may be able to compete for grants from institutions such as the DAAD or the Soros Foundation for program modernization, faculty hiring and support, visiting scholars and speakers, research collaboration, etc.
- To ensure successful implementation of such a reform strategy, the HEI should develop a clear plan and publish verifiable steps how the program management will change -- including meaningful delegation of powers away from the central administration -- and how

new and different priorities will be set in the coming months and years. The same is true for the development of the curriculum, the faculty, and the teaching and other resources.

- Since the political, economic, legal, and academic environment in Ukraine, Central and Eastern Europe, and the World at large is rapidly changing, the HEI needs to foster a mentality of constant and dynamic movement.
- The system of quality assurance has to reflect this change. The current top-down approach needs to give way to a quality culture along the lines of the Japanese Kaizen culture in which every stakeholder is at all times striving to make suggestions for the improvement of the institution and the educational process and the gradual elimination of all weaknesses and shortcomings, and in which the institution never discourages and always welcomes these suggestions.
- Future assessment teams should carefully analyze to what extent the HEI has taken up and implemented these reform suggestions. It would be a great disappointment if another team should have to encounter groups of students to whom everything is already perfect, and nothing can be or should be or needs to be improved!

\*If the programme is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of “must do” actions** in order to assure that students admitted before programme’s non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.



## IV. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the expert panel based on the Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) and the interviews with the University administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners). The evaluation team gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of study programme *Law and Human Rights Activities* the First Cycle at Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University with all areas of evaluation assessed as satisfactory.

Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University fulfils a significant and important role in Uzhgorod and the Zakarpattia Oblast. It is in many cases the only option for lower income students and those who cannot move elsewhere to obtain higher education. The HEI has done a very good job in building goodwill and support among the population and, in particular, the social partners and the academic community itself.

Now it is time to take the HEI from its current status as a decent but dated institution with many traditional features of centralized management to new levels of excellence where the next generation of critical thinkers and leaders for the legal profession in Ukraine can be cultivated.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The first cycle study programme *Law and Human Rights Activities* at Augustine Voloshyn Carpathian University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	2
4.	Facilities and learning resources	2
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	<b>Total:</b>	12

\*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Expert Panel's chairperson: Prof. Dr. iur. Frank Emmert LL.M., FCI Arb