



Introduction

A site-visit of the University of Art and Design of Cluj-Napoca (UAD) has been conducted in November 2009 in order to assess the compliance of UAD activities with ARACIS requirements.

The experts have appreciated the welcome and commitment of all people encountered with their institution during the meetings with all the stakeholders and the visits on the premises of the various departments of UAD. Many informations have been made available by the self-evaluation report (SER). Other data were provided on request and during meetings during the site-visit or were available on the website of the University.

The present report will deal with the following aspects of discussed during the site-visit :

1. The context of UAD's activities and its implications on the evaluation process
2. The quality assurance process
3. Perspectives

1. The Universities of Arts and Design context and its implications on the evaluation process.

UAD has two faculties:

- the Faculty of Fine Arts
- the Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design

two colleges:

- the University College of Fine and Decorative Arts in Bistrita
- the University College of Fine and Decorative Arts in Sighișoara

and the Department for Training of the Teaching Staff .

In the academic year 2009, UAD has a total number of 1023 students, 84 teaching staff and 69 administrative staff.

The courses and degrees structure is now adjusted to the Bologna process scheme with :

- a first Cycle of 3 years – Diploma de Licenta (B.A.) in the following subjects :
 - Plastic Arts – painting, sculpture, grafic arts, foto-video-computer arts;
 - Conservation and restoration
 - Pedagogy of the Arts
 - decorative Arts – ceramics, glass-metal, textile Arts (fashion design, textil design)
 - Design
- a second Cycle of 2 years – Master in plastic and decorative Arts
- a third Cycle of 3 years – Doctorate in plastic and decorative Arts

UAD activity context is characterized by its very specific profesional character : artists, creators, researchers-teachers and all sorts of professionals mastering a multiplicity of techniques in a great variety of sectors.

The function of UAD is to train specialists in the field of Fine and Decorative Arts and Design, willing to work as artists, designers, other professionals and teaching staff at pre-university and university level.

The curriculum has to cope with an often great initial orientation uncertainty among the students and the great variety of their possible profesional futures : artists who can live on their works, teachers, professionals of the various techniques taught at UAD. Therefore the necessity of a broad scope of activities aiming together at training professionals in a multiplicity of techniques and know-hows and simultaneously promoting creativity of the students (or rather creating a study and activity environment removing obstacles to, and favouring, the blooming of this creativity)

The variety of objectives and motivations, the very personnal character of artistic creation reflect on students and their studies, as well as the variety of present and

future job opportunities. This requires to focus on flexibility, with a strong core of basic subjects, knowledge and know-hows, and on interdisciplinarity. This may be seen in different ways in the various departments where a common core of a few basic subjects, like drawing for instance, are given several times. This may appear as a duplication : this may be justified by lack, limited size or dispersion of teaching space but mostly by the relevance of keeping a variety of points of view and approaches, specific to the different departments.

The teaching staff has its specificities, characterised by a variable mix of artist and teacher-researcher profiles.

Research, as an essential element of University recognition and funding, is a rather recently (2001-2002) officially recognized activity of Art Schools, although the importance of research components were more and more important with interdisciplinary convergences of arts, new technologies and sciences, also with growing links with the creative industries.

In order to create and maintain an adequate human and learning environment, able to promote creative individualities, UAD must put itself in a situation where the variety of complementary, sometimes contradictory (in the approaches, methods and behaviour required) objectives have to be pursued simultaneously, from original expression through personal creation to mastering of multiple techniques, efficient initiation and training of the school population, disseminating art interest and practices among the adult population and preparation to production technical, esthetical and economic requirements.

An adequate interdisciplinarity and the transversal character of several courses correspond to the diversity of requirements and opportunities of the labour market in these fields, flexible and evolving. Some of them are more strongly orientated towards new technologies and relying on provision of updated equipment and closer links with their economic environment, notably in the creative and cultural industries (design, fashion, video, new computer media). They also require contacts with academic and research departments in other higher education institutions involved in research, development and training in the related sciences and technologies.

UAD is thus a complex ecosystem, which has to recreate continuously a living and dynamic, up-to-date synthesis between the Arts departments specific tradition and their interaction and modernization, notably through a constant awareness of its economic and social environment, students' expectations and the necessary acquisition and mastering of new technologies.

Students with a certain level of polyvalence of their studies, with double competences, mastering several expression possibilities and techniques will be better prepared for polytechnic job opportunities and abilities required in the future.

2. The Quality concern in the University

The above mentioned complexity makes a Quality culture and dimension in the Arts and design fields harder to define and maintain.

The University intends to respond to performance criteria, standards and indicators of the External Evaluation Methodology of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ARACIS, and the European higher education area (EHEA), notably through its participation in the European League of Institutes of the Art (ELIA) and its European projects in Quality Assurance and the assessment of Art degrees.

2.1. Quality Management

Since 2008 an Evaluation and Quality Assurance Commission was established as one of the Senate's specialized committees (together with the Committee for Academic Programs' Assessment, the Scientific Research Committee, the Student Advisory Committee, the PhD Committee, the International Academic Cooperation Committee, the Budget Advisory Council, the Committee for Public Relations and University Promotion, the Senate's College of Honor).

With the intervention of AJA Registrars, a certification body providing ISO and other standard accreditation services, the Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee has created a quality management and communication system (QMS) for the

relations between the UAD central administration and the Departments, and between the Departments. It has yet described and formalized all its procedures, compiled in a QMS manual. UAD has been awarded the ISO 9001 certification. AJA is expected to come back to UAD in 2010 in order to assess the implementation of its strategic and yearly operational plan.

2.2. Quality of Teaching

Within the Faculties function the Cathedras, regrouping the specialists teaching staff in charge of a common family of subjects. They elaborate a yearly Activity Report based on the scientific and artistic activity agenda of each member of the teaching staff.

The Faculties regroup the Departments : they organize the teaching activity and are responsible for the quality of the courses. They control the professional performance of the teaching staff and of the students.

The curricula are supervised by a scientific and didactic committee, elected for four years by the University Senate, consisting of members of the Teaching Staff, from each specialization.

The scientific and didactic committee is autonomous in conceiving the curricula's structure and its modernization, and also in the initiatives connected to the teaching activity.

The curricula are made up of a vast range of theoretical and practical subjects, meant to insure a high standard of artistic education and creative professionalism in all branches of visual arts and design and to respect national standards. The Curricula are structured according to the European Credit Transfer System.

The University of Art and Design has postgraduate studies (« master studies cycle »), awarding a Master's Diploma. Admission to master courses is made on a competition basis, for an established number of places which vary according to annual requests of the two faculties. The candidates are able to choose their research project supervisor from any cathedra of the University.

2.3. Quality assessment by students

The students are expected to fill yearly (soon to be semestrial) questionnaires, for each specialization, about all aspects of quality of the courses they attend to, and their consistency with their expectations.

Questionnaires about the competences acquisition and relevance of their studies are also proposed to degree-holders and alumni.

They are used as feed-back for the recurrent updating process of teaching and for information for potential students.

2.4. Quality of research assessment

New criteria were to be developed to take research developments into consideration, in three dimensions :

- educative research and links with society,
- artistic research focussing on impact of sciences and experimentations on artistic practices ,
- applied research focussing on links between arts and the creative industries and their impact on society.

A recent formalization of assessment criteria brings equivalences between the usual publications criteria and artistic performances (exhibitions and events).

In this perspective UAD created a Center for scientific research and artistic creation which was awarded an excellence label in 2004

A significant indicator is that half of full professors staff has now a PhD.

2.5. The international environnement of UAD is also a decisive factor of Quality concern and enhancement.

UAD is affiliated to

- the European League of Institutes of the Art (ELIA) an association founded in 1990 and representing approximately 350 higher arts education institutions in 45 countries. ELIA is very much involved in implementation of the Bologna Process in higher arts education and the development of innovative MA and PhD programmes.

- the International Council of Fine Arts Deans (ICFAD) founded in 1964, with over 400 arts deans, focusing on issues that impact all creative units in higher education including fine and performing arts, arts education, art history, architecture and communication.

It develops cooperation with higher education institutions having the same specialization : this network is an important tool of international visibility and recognition. It participates in various projects within programs such as SOCRATES/ERASMUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI, PHARE, and the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS), and maintains links with foreign cultural centers and Art foundations.

2.5. The national environment of UAD is also providing quality incentives
UAD cooperates with the other Romanian Schools of Arts (Arts University of Bucuresti, Timisoara, Faculty of Visual Arts of Oradea university) with museums, the school authorities for the teachers' training and with the Romanian Fine Arts Union. It organises periodically several exhibitions of works produced by the artist staff and students, either in its two own galleries or in broader spaces in museums. It develops links with enterprises, such as Renault (with the department of Design) and Jolidon (Fashion).

3. Perspectives

Cluj UAD has a recognized and efficient core of activities around its two faculties. It has to maintain a right balance and care for productive interactions and solidarities between the more « traditional » departments and the more « modern » ones where the number of candidates is expanding faster (new media, fashion, design)

The students of UAD are appreciated by the employers encountered. They stress the efficient versatility of culture and abilities, insisting however on some insufficiencies in domains of preparation to their working life and their relation to the economic production world.

Introductory courses and more in depth options related with various aspects of the economic professional aspects of the applied arts would be very useful, such as projects design and coordination, team work within a budget, legal aspects such as patents and brands, contracts, marketing.

However this side of general culture, profession oriented, should not develop to such an extent it might disrupt the delicate balance to be maintained between the constraints of acquiring techniques and work discipline and organization in order to train good professionals on the one hand and the creation of a teaching and social environment favouring the emergence of individual artist personalities on the other hand.

UAD can also benefit from the consolidation of a national network of higher education Art institutions, including other existing Arts Universities, museums, and those universities which have developed plastic arts departments (or intend to do so) or which have engineering and sciences departments involved in developing technologies (e.g. computing, textile) relevant for Arts purposes. This would allow existing institutions to benefit from more exchanges and impulses due to more familiarity of students and teachers with the variety of projects and syntheses elaborated by each School between their multiple functions.

UAD would also benefit from a more systematic and visible display of its numerous achievements in its institutional communication, also by valuing its contributions to the activity and the scientific knowledge of renowned artists and works : for instance its fund of Brancusi photographs could be better put in view, brought to the knowledge of specialists and museums, provided it can be adequately protected.



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