



**External Institutional Evaluation of the “Carol I”  
National Defense University (Bucharest)**

Foreign Expert Report prepared for ARACIS  
Romanian Quality Agency For Higher Education

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## **Introduction**

I was invited by the Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS) to join the evaluation team of the institutional evaluation process of the National Defense University (NDU) "Carol I" in Bucharest as an external, foreign evaluator. The evaluation took place between Wednesday 12 May and Friday 14 May 2010. In this process as a foreign expert evaluator I was responsible for establishing an overview of the NDU focusing on the main points of continuous improvement of quality and future development aspects with outlining the main dimensions of present and future challenges of the university.

Before the three-day long visit I received the self-evaluation report of NDU and the Quality Evaluation Activities Guide for University Study Programs and for Higher Education Institutions. During the preparation, before my arrival in Bucharest, I studied the Self-evaluation Report prepared by the NDU and the ARACIS guidance. During my stay in Bucharest I had the possibility to study and evaluate other documentations connected with the didactic process, scientific research and other activities typical for the higher education institution. During the evaluation I visited the faculty and other organizational cells of the NDU, I also participated in meetings with the NDU management staff, students, graduates and employers of the NDU graduates. I also had a possibility to visit the NDU library and estimate the NDU infrastructure. My report follows the structure of the self-evaluation report of the institution.

## **Background**

The National Defense University "Carol I" with its over 120-years tradition is a public institution of military higher education. It is also a part of the national education system, accredited under the Romanian law in the area of higher education. The University trains and specializes Romanian and foreign military and civilian experts in order to perform staff and expertise functions for the defense, public order and national security structures. The University also carried out scientific research.

At present the NDU, as part of the national education system and the European Higher Education Area integrates the principles of the Bologna education process with NATO standards in education and research activities. The main organizational

cell of the NDU is the Faculty of Staff and Command, which organizes and carries out License Studies, Master's Studies and Doctoral Studies. There are also one department and four colleges that organize and conduct specific intensive education duties. A foreign language department carries out intensive and non-intensive language training for the military and civilian personnel. The education department for long distance learning organizes short thematic on-line courses. The university also includes the University Library, the Publishing House, research and administrative structures.

Education in the NDU is closely linked to labor market requirements. All graduates of the University are employed in different structures of the Ministry of the National Defense and in institution that have responsibilities and duties regarding public order and national security.

### **The leadership of the NDU and the managerial structures**

According to the information included in the NDU self-evaluation report and in other written documents, the academic and the administrative leadership of the "Carol I" NDU have the appropriate competencies to do their work properly. The University structure contains three distinct areas with clear responsibilities: the area of education, the area of scientific research and the area of logistics. From the point of view of education the most important units of education are functional units: the Faculty of Command and Staff (the main body of education), the War College, the Crisis Management and Multinational Operations College, the Defense Intelligence College, the Regional Department for Defense Resources Management, the Foreign Languages Department and the Advanced Distributed Learning Department.

The University leadership is composed of all management positions and all agencies at the University level and at the level of each structure in the institution. The NDU is led by the University Senate, chaired by the Rector. The faculty is led by the faculty council, chaired by the dean, the departments are headed by the office chair, chaired by the heads of departments.

## **The NDU teaching staff**

The titular teaching staff in the NDU has proper competencies, qualifications, and academic degrees, which results in a good level of performance in education and training process. In "Carol I" NDU there are 81 academic teachers who obtained their main functions at the University, out of whom, 33 are university professors or associate professors. In addition, there are 29 teachers with the title of university consultant professor for PhD who lead the PhD work and some educational activities with the students.

The Senior Academic Staff (Rector, Deputy Commandant for Education, Deputy Commandant for Scientific Research, Scientific Secretary of the Senate, Dean, Deputy Deans and Heads of Departments) consists of professors and associate professors with the basic teaching norm.

In the NDU teaching positions are filled by competition. The competition to fill teaching positions has an open system, because the competition is open for any person who meets the regulations in accordance with the legislation in force, for each category of teaching positions.

The teaching staff employed permanently in the University and the personnel who carries out educational activities at "Carol I" National Defense University, meet the legal conditions for the occupation of teaching positions.

## **Material resources**

The NDU infrastructure is sufficient for educational process and other University activities. The teaching space of the University consists of four buildings including an auditorium, the Senate Hall, 97 classrooms, 6 lecture rooms, 13 specialized laboratories, 6 research centers, library, a mess hall, a military restaurant and 2 hostels for students. The "Carol I" NDU has also at its disposal sports and relaxation facilities (for the students and the teaching staff) and a medical centre as well. The number of seats in classrooms, laboratories and other didactic facilities are correlated with numbers and specialization of study groups, for each program of University studies.

In the field of information technology the number of computers and laptops (over 860) and other digital equipment is impressive. The computers are configured on wire or

wireless network, which allows the access to the Internet for didactic, scientific research process and other purposes.

The NDU library is well organized and equipped. Its stores, which include over 52 000 book titles with the number of over 154 000 volumes, satisfy the current requirements of educational process, scientific research and other activities. The University library collections compromise different categories of documents like: books, manuscripts, series, military literature, maps, audio-visual and electronic documents. The number of subscriptions of publications and periodicals, 14 of which are foreign, correspond to the main University mission.

### **The process of education in the National Defense University**

The NDU meets Bologna process requirements by implementing the three levels of studies - License Studies, Master's Studies, and Doctoral Studies, which allows the University to joint to the European Higher Education Area.

During the evaluation I focused on Master's degree studies for students who are officers. Each study program is designed properly and includes a part – approximately 35 % - that concerns security, defense and military art, mostly on tactical and operational level. The study programs correspond to the NATO requirement and consist of subjects concerning:

- NATO as a political-military organization;
- NATO command and control structure;
- process of military planning on tactical and operational level and planning procedures;
- NATO solutions in military operational art and tactics;
- possible solutions in organization and execution of joint, combat and crisis response operations.

Each study program is designed properly and comprises European Credit Transfer System points for each subject, for example during Master's Studies (two-year studies) each student can collect together not less than 120 ECTS points. The ECTS system shows the students' effort in each subject. The University, Faculty,

departments and other organizational university cells have prepared proper didactic materials like handbooks, courses, military exercises and so on.

The military students during two years of master's degree studies participate in military exercises on different levels (battalion level, brigade level) organized by the Command and Staff Faculty. At the end of each academic year the University organizes a complex military exercise on the joint level, in which all services – land, air and naval forces play on the same scenario. This exercise is conducted in Romanian and with the participation of only Romanian students. During the studies selected military students take part in multinational exercises in foreign military academies and in live exercises as members of multinational staffs. This is not enough to achieve a proper level of interoperability for all military students. It would be better to organize this exercise, even a part of it, in English with a participation of foreign students from military academies. Thanks to this solution military students will be better prepared to do their tasks in a multinational environment.

Advanced Distributed Learning plays very important role in NDU. Courses run by Advanced Distributed Learning Department support educational process, especially on Master's Studies and Doctoral Studies.

Student's final works (thesis) represent a proper level and include theoretical aspects, usually confirmed by practice and (at the end) final conclusions, comments or remarks and future proposals.

During my visit I had the possibility to take part in meetings with military students and graduates of the NDU and also with employers who represented different departments of Romanian Ministry of Defense, General Staff and all services. I found them very open minded, energetic and intelligent. Everybody confirmed that they are very well prepared to conduct their military duties during peace, crises and wartime as the NDU studies are conducted on a proper and high level. They stressed that the study programs have been changed according to the directions and requirements of the Ministry of Defense and General Staff. I also observed a strong solidarity among officers of all levels of positions and strong loyalty to their University. I have also found that most students I have met speak English very well and they communicate in this language fluently.

## **Research activities in the National Defense University**

NDU plays a very important role in scientific research, with promoting knowledge in different fields. The scientific activities in the NDU have been organized and performed on a proper and high level. These activities are carried out according to the requirements of the Ministry of National Defense and other beneficiaries (the President of Romania, the Government), as a result of applying the NATO standards, meeting the needs of the European higher education and Romanian higher military education.

The scientific research activities in the NDU are carried out by the Defense and Security Strategic Studies Centre and by 7 research centers.

The Defense and Security Strategic Studies Centre is an organizational cell of University structure which specializes in scientific research of security problems and military strategy, covering the needs at the higher level, like security and strategic concepts and theories, problems of the Euro-Atlantic and European integration, strategic interest and transformation of the Romanian Armed Forces.

In 7 centers of research there are organized the scientific research activities, which are carried out by the academic teachers. They comprise the fields of:

- military art (strategy, operational art, tactics),
- management of the defense resources;
- land, air and naval forces;
- military logistics and finance;
- command, control and communication system;
- planning process and planning procedures.

All scientific research activities at the University have been conducted according to the plans worked out on the different levels - on the University level, on the scientific research centers levels and also on departments' levels. The most important is the plan of scientific research of the NDU "Carol I" which contains the list of grants, the fields, objectives and thematic areas, the list of titles of doctoral dissertations for all University.

Scientific sessions, conferences, symposiums, which are periodically organized at the University, play a very important role in scientific research. Some of them are

international. These activities are important components of scientific research, with an important role in the ideas and opinion exchange.

A well-organized scientific research process at the NDU stimulates the scientific development of academic teachers. The results of scientific research in form of papers, studies, works, monographs, articles and other documents are very useful for the didactic process due to the fact that they are transformed into didactic materials like handbooks, lectures, courses, scenarios of military exercises, etc. The results of the scientific research are also published in three magazines edited by the University.

## **Conclusions**

My report is based on what I experienced; what I saw, what I read and heard before and during my visit. I hope that some of my comments will help the university management in the process of permanent improvement and development. The "Carol I" National Defense University has a specific character. It is a military university which trains and specializes Romanian and foreign military and civilian experts in order to perform staff and expertise functions for the defense, public order and in national security structures. The University meets European Union Standards in European Area of Education and NATO requirements. It has conducted studies and scientific research on a proper and high level. The NDU infrastructure is sufficient for educational process and other University activities.

There is only one suggestion to take into consideration by the NDU management. It would be very important for the University to launch and then develop the cooperation with foreign, similar institutions of military education by organizing a joint exercise for all services at the end of each academic year, with participants from other countries and in common for NATO language. This would be the best solution to prepare students to their duties in multinational environment on the joint level.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector, Vice Rectors, Dean, Vice-Deans Chiefs of Departments, all the University staff and students for the amicable atmosphere and the support during my stay in Bucharest. Last but not the least, my special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

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