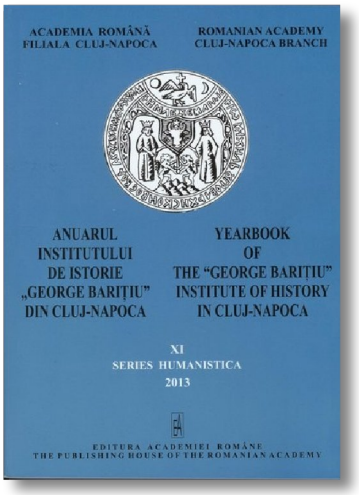

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Issues Regarding Quality Management in Romanian Universities

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ISSUES REGARDING QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN ROMANIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: *The world which we all live in, is going through a process of continuous change. We are the authors of this change, influencing more of less the entire process of human community's development. And in this context, the role of schools in general, especially universities is undeniable.*

The paper aims to analyze significant issues related to quality management in Romanian universities, both in terms of educational service providers and in terms of direct beneficiaries of these services – the students and indirect beneficiaries – the employers.

At present, ensuring quality education becomes increasingly important, both nationally as well as internationally. Students are becoming more aware of the benefit of adequate training, appropriate for the requirements of the world they live in. Since quality management is imperative in educational activities it is only natural for universities to be evaluated in the context of quality management implementation, based on the achievement of the proposed strategic objectives. For these reasons, the need to focus on ensuring the quality of all processes in higher education is being felt increasingly. The implementation of an efficient and effective quality management system in each university would help to identify and evaluate opportunities and deficiencies, for the problem areas to be corrected in time, implementing necessary improvements in the whole academic system.

Key words: *quality, educational services, quality management, evaluation*.

In the current socio-economic context, it has became obvious that education and training are, on the one hand, essential for survival in this knowledge society, and on the other hand, the fact that they are areas that consume significant resources. In Romania, education got to enormous "costs", from all points of view and for everyone. This means that if we want to be competitive at a European level, we need to invest more than we did before.

There has been an increase in the number of articles written on the quality of education in Romania, the number of studies on the quality of education in public

and private universities, the number of people dealing with these issues, in the press or in various meetings, more or less formal. And this is a valid issue, whether we talk about academia actors or not, because a growing number of people realize that we are equally beneficiaries of the results achieved by our graduate during his bachelor's degree, master's degree or even doctoral studies. Society began to pay attention to not only to positive aspects specific to the Romanian school system (on Olympiad medal winners, a graduate employed in a prestigious company, a model researcher etc.), but also less favourable aspects offered by some Romanian universities: some unsuitable spaces for educational services, teachers who live in poverty, the poor performance of students, the poor results of scientific research, the less favourable image at a European level, rather "dusty" teaching methods in case of some study programs or the activity of some professors, and not least, the training of teaching professionals and the system for acquiring the various academic degrees (I think everybody already knows all the endless discussions about retirement age, promotion prerequisites, the skills necessary to doctoral supervisors and others).

And then we naturally come to the point where we ask ourselves: are the money paid by students (in private universities) and taxpayers (in state universities) efficiently spent? Who benefits on account of this money? Do we truly have a quality higher education?

I do not think we are ever going to provide answers to all these questions, but I think it deserves at least a try.

Quality is an ongoing challenge for any university and not a state that can be achieved once and for all. Because of this, the quality of higher education has become a public concern due to reasons that come both from the Romanian context as well as the process of accession to the European Union, where the topic is very much debated. Analysing the information about the education system in different European countries, we observe that in time, each state introduced in its education related legislation, various elements of management and quality assurance, just that ... if we try to compare these different national initiatives, we find little common elements. This is because the quality of the national education system is interconnected to: the values "promoted in that society, the existing educational policies and strategies at national, regional and local level, to the present situation – defined by contextual factors, by culture and traditions –, and to what each of them understood from the evolution of the concept of «quality»".

The need for quality assurance in higher education in Romania has become a topic of national interest as a result of many influencing factors.

Compared to the situation twenty years ago, a great diversification of educational institutions in general and of universities in particular, took place. This also happend on the background of the emergence and development of new information and communication technologies, which favored the emergence of

virtual or transnational educational institutions and introduced important changes in the way of providing outstanding training and learning services. Also, nationally as well as internationally the number of private educational institutions for profit or non-profit increased significantly.

On the other hand, due to socio-economic changes, the orientation towards upper secondary school attendance and towards university level education increased in Romania, so that these forms of training and learning organization can no longer follow selective and elitist criteria, which dominated classical education. Therefore, the quality of education must be carefully constructed and controlled to give confidence to any study degree or certificate. With the increasing number of graduates of upper secondary and tertiary education, the competitiveness for finding a well-paid job increased and it offers real opportunities for personal development. For these reasons, the beneficiaries of educational services are increasingly exigent when it comes to schools and universities and require complete information about their quality, in terms of professional commitment and personal development[1]. Thus, the role of higher education in this context, is undeniable. The academic enviroment has the power and also the responsibility to create professionals who will lead in the near future, the Romanian society integrated into the European Union. From this point of view, the conduct's orientation towards quality should be a goal for every school. Moreover, the mentality of the individual must assimilate the belief that there can be no wealth without responsible and quality work.

But here the question arises naturally: quality means reliability or does reliability attracts quality?

There are some who say that confidence in an institution of higher education is given only by external evaluations of the study programs, of the scientific research results within the assessed institution, the relationship with the business environment, the institution's equipment and facilities.

But there are other opinions which show that validating the quality of educational services offered by a higher education institution can only be done by the institution in question, by the absorption degree of their graduates into the labour market.

Quality assurance actually aims at a set of measures taken in order to generate public confidence in a product or service. In the case of universities, all stakeholders must be able to verify how the money, assigned from the state budget or collected from the students, is being spent and what are the results of having spent them, they must know the institution's mission and objectives, the methods, processes and outcomes of teaching, learning and research . It is very important to transmit a long-term trust.

[1] http://www.ad-astra.ro/library/papers/vlasceanu.pdf (21.01.2013).

According to the legislation in force, currently there are a number of practices to be followed in order to ensure quality in higher education, namely:

- the existence of bodies, standards and procedures for internal and external quality assessment;
- the university's quality management system complience with the nationally and internationally accepted standards (especially since the adoption of the Bologna system);
- the continuous improvement of educational processes, which is not equivalent to the institution's development[2].

Accreditation is part of quality assurance, being that system of measures which prevents programs and institutions from functioning below certain minimal standards, and the others are encouraged to self-evaluate and to improve the quality level already reached.

Accreditation is offered for a limited number of years, encouraging institutions to continuously reflect on their optimal functioning. European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education – ACE, defines accreditation as "a formal and independent decision indicating that an institution of higher education and the study programs it offers, meet certain standards"[3].

In Romania, given the repeated changes in education's legislation, quality assurance policy is based on three fundamental concepts:

1) Accreditation – through which the state exercises quality control based on achieving minimum standards. Control of compliance with these standards is made by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ARACIS based on legislation and national standards for academic structures and programs. The accreditation of a study program allows students to take their graduation exam (BSc or MSc) in the university. In addition, accredited universities are allowed to enter the higher education system with all their rights in place.

2) Evaluation is the process of quantifying the results obtained in time for the optimal functioning of the quality assurance system. It is made by internal and external audit. Internal audit is the responsibility of universities, while external auditing is carried out by competent bodies at national or international level. The external audit is carried out either by ARACIS or by an international certified assessment body. In this context, internal audit is an element of control by the university and it is specific to the quality assurance policy.

3) Certification is the process of evaluating and approving the quality assurance system, developed by a university. Certification is carried out at a national level by an institution authorized for this. The process can be based on ISO international standards or specific education standards.

[2] S. Toma, *Asigurarea calităţii în învăţământul superior* [Quality Assurance in Higher Education], Bucharest, Bucharest University Publishing House, 2008, p. 47.

[3] http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/documents/main-documents (22.01.2013).

In the Romanian higher education system all three methods are now used: accreditation, assessment and certification.

Education quality assessment consists of examining, by many criteria, the extent to which an organization providing education and its programs meet the reference standards.

Following a decision of the ministers of education from the member states of the European Union (Berlin, September 2003), all member states and candidates were required to define and implement – until their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 – a national quality insurance system in higher education. At the same meeting it was agreed that "the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education belongs to each institution".

Based on this decision, it has become necessary, in Romania also, for each university to create and develop their own quality assurance system – known as "quality management system" – in order to make interested parties believe it is able to provide quality exclusive services.

The quality assurance process consists in a set of actions, to develop institutional elaboration capacity, to plan and implement programs of study which make beneficiaries trust the education provider's quality standards. Establishing specific standards is necessary both in terms of internal quality management as well as external quality assurance evaluation.

Moreover, compliance to standards is an institutional policy objective, but identifying them in accordance with its mission remains the choice of the higher education institution.

Continuous improvement of education involves assessment, analysis and continuous corrective action from the education provider based on the selection and adoption of best procedures as well as the selection and application of benchmarks.

Internal quality assurance indicates overall confidence at a manager's, teacher's, administrative staff and student's level, in the quality of service provided by the university. However, this process involves the establishment of a commission for evaluation and quality assurance. strategy and its rules being developed by the education provider (Fig. 1).

The commission for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education institutions has the following structure:

- 1–3 representatives of the teaching staff, elected by secret vote by the senate;
- a union representative designated by it;
- a student representative appointed by the student organization.

In this structure a representative of the employers and one of the minorities among teachers or students[4] can also be proposed.

[4] Parlamentul României, *Legea* (nr. 87 din 10.04.2006) *pentru aprobarea Ordonanței de urgență a Guvernului nr. 75/2005 privind asigurarea calității educației*, „Monitorul Oficial al României", Part I, no. 334, 13.04.2006, art. 3 (1) şi 11 (5), (6) şi (7).

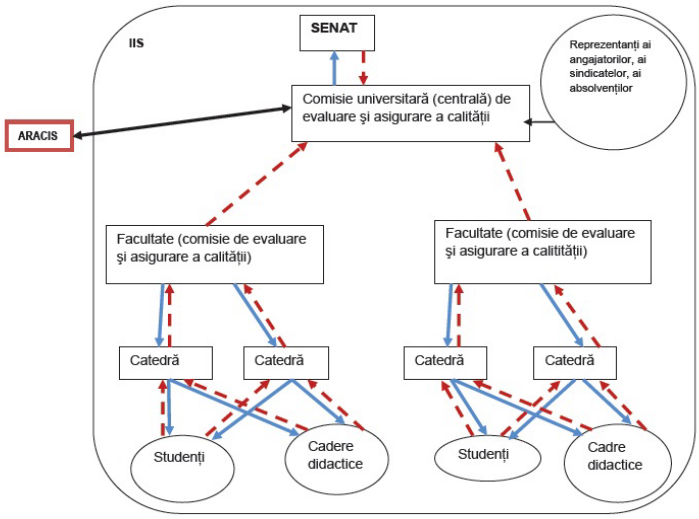

Fig. 1. Formal institutional arrangement on the functioning of universities evaluation and quality assurance[5].

Specialists speak about the existence of several methods for structuring the quality assurance system at a university's level. Therefore, another possible structure from this point of view, may look like this:

a) The dean – coordinator of the quality assurance system implementation at a faculty's level;
b) Faculty committe – officially named by the dean and commissioned with the quality assurance system implementation;
c) Specialty / study programme committe – made of: dean, vice-dean, head of department, teachers and a student.

External quality assurance reflects the confidence generated among the economic agents, national authorities, the state, the community, shareholders, suppliers etc. by the quality of services provided by the university.

The main purpose of ARACIS materializes in the fact that it is responsible for the accreditation of universities, it assesses according to the standards and methodology approved by Government, on request or on its own initiative and it proposes authorization or accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs.

Asigurarea calității în învățământul superior constituie însă o preocupare nu doar la nivel național, ci şi european. Asigurarea calității în învățământul superior din Europa a cunoscut o atenție deosebită începând cu anul 2002, fiind puternic influențată şi de Procesul Bologna. Un pas important în cadrul acestui proces a avut

[5] http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/Publicatii_Aracis/Publicatii_ARACIS/Romana/barometru-final.pdf (Barometrul calității 2010, p. 57 – 18.01.2013).

loc în timpul reuniunii ministeriale de la Bergen din mai 2005, când au fost adoptate Standarde şi Linii Directoare pentru Asigurarea Calităţii în Spaţiul European al Învăţământului Superior (ESG).

Therefore if Europe aims to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, then higher education in this area will need to demonstrate seriousness and interest in the quality of offered programs and degrees and it will need to demonstrate its intention of applying the necessary means in order to ensure and prove this quality.

When talking about this, an undeniable role lies within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). One of the main tasks of this association is to disseminate information, experiences and best practices in quality assurance.

European Union has a long tradition of cooperation with third countries based on a set of policies and instruments in which higher education plays an increasingly important role. Currently, the problems of quality, equity and efficiency in education, come first.

In order to work better, the entire educational system must be maintained at a very high quality level. Public authorities act as the guarantor of the education quality, their task being that of ensuring compliance with the quality standards in each educational institution. Moreover, it is unanimously recognized the need to develop national or international quality standards in education.

Moreover, the need to develop national and international quality standards in education is unanimously recognized.

Quality policies represent true fields of force and motivation in each university. These policies are structured by institutional goals and organizational culture objectives.

The ISO 9000 standards define the quality policy through the objectives and general guidelines of an organization in terms of quality.

In specialized literature, there are a few types of known quality assurance policies, namely:

- → Entropic policies – these policies regard higher education as a well determined system, characterized by a set of parameters defined by each university and the competent ministry. By evaluating the defined parameters, one can obtain the system's status at a given moment in time;
- → Incentive policies, which are also called, field policies. They are characterized by the fact that the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports does not forcibly insert quality assurance in universities, taking as a reference the ISO 9001 quality standards, but it creates a motivational field for the development and implementation of quality management systems;

→ Comprehensive policies that favour the development of organizational culture, without which the implementation of any quality assurance system may be doomed to failure. In the case of the Romanian higher education, it is necessary to address a comprehensive quality assurance policy and an integrating policy which takes the necessary elements from the entropic policy as well as the incentive one[6].

Each higher education institution adopts within its senate, at the suggestion of the university's rector, its own insurance and continuous quality improvement policy, together with internal adequate evaluation methodologies and procedures for programs, activities and qualifications, offered to beneficiaries of initial and ongoing training.

In terms of quality policy at the university level it is obvious that its task is to "focus on students and their needs in order to meet the labor market, to identify their needs and expectations as accurately as possible and to fully satisfy them"[7].

This is a primary aiming point for universities in Romania, when they create their own quality policy, referring to the main components of academic activity, namely:

1) The quality of education, with the following central aspects:

– Defining a coherent training profile for each faculty and harmonizing these profiles inside the university's offer, thereby introducing and maintaining a system of continuous qualitative upgrade of the educational and scientific research offer;
– Identifying study programs opportunities and structural adjustment of the academic offer;
– Identifying real needs and expectations of the socio-economic environment regarding the skills necessary to each program's graduates, correlating them with the university's experience and with the international practice. In this situation there is a real support coming from universities in terms of communication, collaboration and partnership with social integration organizations at a local, regional and national level, which provide the university's major clients and external partners;
– Drawing up appropriate curricula and syllabuses. For universities, the creation and further development of the marketing function is considered important because it is designed for identifying and correct understanding of the external customer needs and also for deepening the academic community consultation;

[6] http://euromentor.ucdc.ro/vol2nr1martie2011/eur-ro/politici-in-domeniul-calitatii-educatiei-cezar-mil.pdf (21.01.2013).

[7] http://www.ubm.ro/main/calitate/documente/Politica%20de%20asigurare%20a%20calitatii%20in%20UNBM.pdf (16.01.2013).

– Identifying and applying best practices for keeping under control and continuously improving the educational process. "The university's management considers that publicizing its results and its human and technical potential as well as cultivating ties with generations of graduates, are permanent and objective means of preserving its partners and customers, gaining new partners and customers and building their confidence in the university."[8]
– Introduction of criteria and procedures for evaluating the quality on all segments of the educational process;
– Introduction of feedback from students, graduates and employers on the structure and quality of educational performance and its appropriate improvement. However, communication and constructive dialogue with students and graduates are considered important means of information, requirement identification and assessment of their satisfaction degree;

2) Quality in scientific research, analyzed in terms of the following aspects:
– Establishing assessment criteria and evaluation procedures for the results of the research, in order to motivate performance;
– Identifying strategic directions of development, scientific research and encouraging the development of excellence centers in these areas, in order to strengthen both basic research as well as the university's capacity of participating into national and international programs;

3) Quality as a dimension of your own organization, namely:
– Identifying and implementing an optimal organizational structure for the quality system, which is based on some principles;
– Human resource policy. The continuous improvement of the university's internal organization is an important means of increasing the efficiency of existing human and material resources. The coordinates of this policy are the following:
  a) Clearly defining performance standards, evaluation criteria and recognition of individual and group activity;
  b) Promoting training and continuous improvement;
  c) Creating a climate that encourages responsibility and initiative;
  d) Regular assessment of the individual contribution to the institution's achievement.

In the European Union context, considering the need to adapt Romanian universities into a competitive environment, the quality policy dictates compatibility and alignment of university activities to advanced academic practices in European Union countries, namely:

- Creating, supporting, developing and fostering relationships with traditional and perspective universities in the EU and other countries, as a means of

[8] http://www.upt.ro/pdf/calitate/Declaratia_Rectorului.pdf (21.01.2013).

aligning to advanced academic standards and institutional policies and as a criterion of reputation recognition in the international academic environment;
- Making the educational offer compatible, organizationally and in terms of content, quantity, quality and timeliness of the theoretical and practical professional knowledge and cultivated practical skills, with that of the universities in the European academic area, but not only, in order to increase the university's capacity of integrating in the various international networks;
- Making the research activity in the university compatible with that of the institutions in the European Research Area;
- Encouraging and supporting the development of laboratories and centers of excellence as well as the widest possible cooperation in their use[9].

The quality assurance system in a university must meet stakeholders expectations and facilitate the fulfilling of institutional policy objectives in the field of quality.

Improving the quality of higher education is a complex process that requires the adoption of measures aimed at:

- Making study programs compatible at a national and international level, complying with the regulations adopted by ARACIS;
- Correlating the syllabus content of department coordinated subjects, reffered to in the curricula with subjects from advanced universities in the country and in the European Union;
- Developing self-assessment documentation for the forthcoming accreditation of each major;
- Improving assessement and self-assessment of the education process implemented within the department;
- Securing professional promotion conditions for the department's members, based on performance and complying with minimal legal standards and the standards required by the university's management through its own methodologies;
- Providing the necessary material and teaching instrumentality for each subject;
- Enhancing the activities of the department's teachers by means of lifelong learning programs;
- Organizing and supporting teachers and students participation into national and international scientific.

According to the guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions[10] there are six major steps in designing and implementing a basic quality assurance system. These are:

[9] http://www.umfiasi.ro/organizare/Documents/Managementul%20calitatii/Anexa%2032-00-40b%20Politica%20privind%20calitatea.pdf (21.01.2013).

[10] http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/Proceduri/Metodologie_de_evaluare_externa.pdf (12.01.2013).

1. The development or improvement agreement, refers to the fact that it is necessary to state clearly and precisely what needs to be developd or improved in order to ensure and improve quality. At this stage, objectives, strategies and criteria for quality needs must be defined and discussed in seminars with participation of senior university managers;
2. The second stage consists in identifying personnel and allocating responsibilities related to the development and implementation of the system;
3. Linking the information regarding best practices in universities. This can be done by conducting visits of the development team members in different faculties, departments and interviews with their staff, but also by analyzing existing documentation from the faculty and the department. At this point of the process, a quality strategy will be determined or a strategy to improve quality, this involving a decision on the matters of academic activities which will be subject to quality assurance or improvement, as well as the priority order for carrying them out;
4. The fourth step involves developing adequate work practices as well as criteria and indicators for assessing them. A vertical quality assurance process occurs, from bottom to top, which begins with faculties and departments being involved in finding solutions to implementing their ideas and proposals while monitoring and controlling quality;
5. Another stage, namely the fifth, comes with the establishing / adoption of the quality assurance system. This requires a detailed action plan with activities, timelines and responsible personnel being appointed;
6. In the last stage a process of monitoring takes place,that must be organized in order to allow periodic quality checks for those aspects that were assigned in the designated quality strategy. The advantage of this process is that it helps checking the validity and safety of the quality assurance system as well as informing decisions for future development.

Once the system is implemented, its applicability must be closely monitored, and decisions for its improvement must have a certain regularity.

Making an effective quality assurance management, fosters undisputed academic market success for all institutions in the field, whether they are public or private.

In this respect, private universities trying to build and implement a good image in the public's mind can achieve success only in the context of a coherent management process. To this sense, scholarly literature highlights some proposals on quality in universities, namely:

- Analyzing the problems higher education is facing;
- Analyzing the drawing up of curriculum, according to each subject's usefulness for the labour market;
- Analyzing the curriculum by comparison so that there is no fundamental difference between universities;

- Developing research as sole criteria for promotion and employment in some of the university positions;
- The possibility of having quality assessed by other agencies, not just ARACIS, pointing out that these agencies must be recognized by ENQA;
- The possibility of finalizing the undergraduate studies according to the system prior to Bologna and funding of the first Bologna cycle, providing master's degree opportunities for both sets of graduates;
- Depending on the growing need of confirming both internally and externally, there is a need to reappraise the approach of study programs quality, based on both internal and external assessment.

Having the present education law distinguishing between private and state higher education, especially in the area of financing, in order to balance this situation, both public and private schools should receive subsidies from the state's budget in a fixed proportion established by the law according to the strategic principle of the national educational policy for equal and enhanced access to education, subsidy that will complement revenues obtained from tuition.

Private universities in Romania, over 50 in number, and the students who pursue their studies within them which account for nearly half of the students in the country should be proportionally represented in all national bodies – National Council for Education Reform, National Council for Perspective and Orientation in Higher Education, National Council for Attesting Titles, Diplomas and University Certificates, National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education, National Council for Financing Higher Education, National Council for University Qualifications.

The European University, through the Bologna Process, gives universities a leading role in the development of the society, based on knowledge in all its cultural, educational, economic and social components.

In this context, private education represents an important foundation for society's general development and the role of private universities becomes increasingly emphasised, as they proved to be openen towards the Romanian society and its needs, responding effectively to rapid changes in external environment.

Democratization and the manifestation of private higher education at a national and European level, provides important possibilities for people coming from different backgrounds, to undertake university studies, many of them having interests, talents and ambitions that can not be adequately met only by public higher education sector.

Principles that must govern private higher education may take the following form: "guaranteing university autonomy, respecting and ensuring academic freedom, public accountability, quality assurance, non-discriminatory access to higher education, transparency of decisions and respecting principles of ethics and professional conduct".

The public function of private higher education should not be neglected as long as a developed private higher education sector has a substantial role in the general welfare of society.

In this respect, governments and international organizations must promote national and international policies to support diversity in the providing of private higher education. An important aspect here, would be to allow competition and collaboration between public and private higher education institutions, as well as increasing the diversity of higher education institutions, based on the implementation of complex quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms in scientific research and equal free access to grants and research projects.

It is important to highlight the fact that, the private higher education has funded its own development so far, without any support from the government, which is against the stipulations of the Education Act.

The education's reform process must be understood and actively supported by a large part of the Romanian society, the academic community and of course by the political class as well, otherwise it will fail into propaganda statements, with no real chance of success.

In these conditions, the need for co-financing private education from the state's budget arises.

But the financing of the Romanian education system must also be consistent with the competition and state aid laws as well as with the community practice in the field.

Thus, from the competitive sphere point of view, developing financing schemes or applying mechanisms that are comparable to those used at community's level, must facilitate open and non-discriminatory access to budgetary funds, whether central or local, on a competitive basis, available to all educational institutions – public or private, accredited according to the law.

In private universities a creative and decentralized management is practiced, which takes an increasingly pronounced leadership profile, this being an organizational integrator superior to management.

Also, compared to public universities, the private ones practice a team management, which means people in the group have the same responsibility in relation to a set of objectives.

Therefore, team management turns into a powerful integrator, because at a team level, functional and operational structure is not longer rigid and the adopted style is no longer that of command and controls.

In this context the functions of planning, organizing, leadership and control are based on an increased responsibility and an increased freedom of action and the practiced management is characterized by innovation and creativity.

In conclusion, it is obvious that private universities cannot assume the managerial phenomenon developed in public universities, where very often, those responsible for the academic management do not have adequate training in terms of

management and do not understand the managerial elements of the functions, although they may be highly professional teachers, sometimes with extensive scientific research in fields different to management.

Quality, performance, competitiveness – these are the essential requirements falling within university policy in the medium and long term. Their fulfillment is subject to developing from the required accreditation process standards to performance standards, which provide graduates with skills in a global environment characterized by exigency and dynamics. Achieving standards of excellence is possible only if all university activity is oriented towards performance, by continuously improving the offer and the results, by practicing a performant management at all levels and encouraging a responsible attitude with the entire staff (teachers, students and administration). The competitiveness of universities is determined by their ability to adapt to the changing needs of the economic and social environment and of the competitive market in the field of educational services supply and why not consultancy.

Analyzing the issues outlined above we can conclude the following:

- The quality of education is determined by the value added to educational services provided to beneficiaries;
- Accurate evaluation of quality is possible only by combining procedures for self-evaluation, internal evaluation and external evaluation;
- A simple quantitative assessment of the results will never be made, as alone – without a qualitative assessment it is not conclusive (the graduation percentage, the labour market insertion degree and other quantitative results are not necessarily relevant, without taking this into account the qualitative ones related to the value added or the value created by the education system);
- To get quality, the business environment and the social one must also be involved: the systems and quality assurance procedures in the university are not exclusively its duties;

The study's conclusion relates to the multivalent nature of the quality and quality management concepts and, consequently, to the tools that need to be developed, which have the following key features:

- reflection, by means of the quality indicators which will be developed and which characterize the evolution of this concept: internal quality assurance, quality assurance through interface, quality assurance for the future;
- evaluation, judging the quality will be made both by referring to standards as well as through indicators of beneficiary satisfaction and progress;
- value added indicators will be combined with the value created ones;
- standards, indicators and quantitative descriptors will be combined with the qualitative ones.

Concern for quality assurance in Romanian universities is timely and important, as long as internationally, quality is considered as being the solution that provides higher education institutions with credibility in relation to their customers, makes it competitive in the international market of educational services and ensures its performance. The risks of lagging behind in higher education quality assurance are significant for universities and their graduates: non-recognition of diplomas, university's loss of credibility in relation to the beneficiaries and decrease of their competitiveness.