

General questions and Discussion

1. No; no

2. PhD candidates should be admitted to a PhD program after careful examination of their academic training and research plans. PhD supervisors should be nominated after serious consideration, based on objective criteria concerning their scientific achievements and their capacity to supervise PhD students.

For postdoctoral students there is presently no clear strategy in Romania. There are practically no special financial resources for scientific organizations to support a postdoctoral stage

3. Presently there is extensive debate on:

- a. Evaluation of research & education units and staff
- b. Awarding of research grants
- c. Addressing the reduction of the number of the researchers due to “brain drain”

4. Ad Astra, an Association for Romanian researchers, polled presidential candidates for the 2004 election on their viewpoint upon the improvement of the research sector.

Presently, Ad Astra is consulted by the Education Ministry and his staff in the process of establishing a reform strategy for rehabilitation of higher education and research. Ad Astra supports the requirement to introduce clear performance assessment criteria (e.g., bibliometrics, and national and international peer-review) for professional promotion and for funding. Ad Astra also monitors the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education (CNCSIS). At present, Ad Astra monitors and proposes criteria for scientific quality assessment of scientific journals. It also organizes conferences on topics concerning research policy (e.g. - Migration of the young Romanian researchers: performance and return). Ad Astra promotes science to the younger generation by organizing talks for established researchers in high schools. Details on Ad Astra's activities can be found at the following address: www.ad-astra.ro/events/10/?lang=en

5. Ad Astra's main objective is to support and promote scientific research and to ease the communication between the Romanian researchers worldwide. Decisions are taken by vote. All members have the right to express their viewpoints and to vote.

6. Yes, it did (<http://www.ad-astra.ro/journal/3/?lang=ro>), upon the condition of Romanian doctoral training. Ad Astra noted the major difficulties the PhD students encounter (i.e., difficulties in choosing a supervisors in the field they want to study, as most of them are old and scientifically non-performant, small salaries, lack of research infrastructure) and proposing improvements e.g., the supervisor must be scientifically active at the international level, he/she should provide financial support through research grants, he/she must have a manageable number of PhD students - e.g. in natural sciences, no more than 5 PhD students, simultaneously, the PhD thesis should be

published/publishable in internationally recognized journals, and by involving foreign academics in the PhD dissertation evaluation.

Ad Astra journal also published opinions of some prestigious scientists on the subject of doctoral studies¹

Affiliation to EURODOC can help in addressing the dysfunctionalities of Romanian doctoral program by referring to the European standards. The stipulations of Bologna Process could be extended to the doctoral program (regarding particularly the criteria for scientific evaluation of PhD theses and of doctoral programs).

7. EURODOC policy could concentrate on ways to adopt a global view on the statute of PhD and postdoctoral fellows. It also could set up global standards for quality of knowledge for PhD graduates in various research areas and determine European candidates (like Romania) to adopt these standards.

8. The level of doctoral education could be improved, since research and education are currently affected by lack of funds, thus mobility could improve work environment. European evaluation will ease Romanian evaluation of educational and research units.

9. Expectations: improvement of doctoral training and of the doctoral education system
The mentioned scheme (doctoral education as a 3rd cycle) will involve canceling of the part-time PhD programs, which are not paid by the Government. At present, many of the most successful PhD students in Romania are in this situation having to prepare a PhD thesis and work in an Institution at the same time.

Fears: the doctoral program will become accessible to a larger public more or less prepared for research activities, and the quality level of the PhD theses will suffer as a result.

10. The Lisbon Strategy is not yet applied.

11. PhD status still remains ambiguous.

At the moment, the PhD student has a mixed status, as new rules are applied since 2000, stating that the PhD status is that of a student. Yet, in practice the old rules still apply, i.e., a PhD candidate can be an employee, even external to the institution where he is pursuing the doctoral training. In both cases, low salary, if any, is the main disadvantage. Among advantages, the flexibility of the status – as presented above, is not to be neglected, since the candidate can choose the most suitable from both types of doctoral position.

¹ www.ad-astra.ro/journal/3/?lang=ro; Sanda Clejan, 2003, Open letter on the PhD studies in Romania, Ad Astra 1 (2),

12. Full time PhD students – provided that special regulations will be adopted for situations where PhD students are willing to perform the work towards earning their doctoral degree within these institutions

Supervision and Training

13. Our organization support adopting and implementation of the above mentioned document in Romania as well.

14. Basically, the following examination steps are followed in all subject areas and institutions:

- during the first phase of the examination (3 years-for part-time doctoral candidates/ 2 years for full-time doctoral candidates), the candidate must give 3 oral presentations of the study topic basde on literature reviews and state-of-the-art in the chosen field, and has to pass 3 examinations on topics related to his/her research. During these presentations and examinations, the board of examiners is formed of 3 – 5 persons.
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- during the second phase of the doctoral training, the student has to prepare his doctoral thesis, which is submitted to 3 referees. The referees constitute the board of examiners in the final examination for the doctoral position.
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The board of examiners is established by the supervisor in agreement with the PhD student, generally consisting of a president (dean or head of department), the supervisor and two members from different institutions and from different towns.

15. At the moment, in Romania, there are two main doctoral programs: the new (full-time) doctoral programs, as well as old-style “part-time” doctoral programs, that do not require course attendance.

The general admission requirements are holding an MSc degree, plus passing written and oral examinations.

16. There is no system in place yet to evaluate the research and education institutions. There is only a set of standards, which have to be met by these institutions, as set by their respective authorities (Academy, Council for Research in Educational Institutions, etc.). Yet, meeting standards is compulsory only for private educational institutions. Otherwise, only rankings and excellence is achieved by comparing performances to such standards. On the basis of principle of authonomy for higher education institutions , these institutions are free to impose their ownevaluation strategy. Unfortunately, research degrees are awarded on the basis of subjective criteria, not a objective ones. Performance is not encouraged by any means.

Basically, it is the National Council for Universitary Titles, Diploma, Cerificates Attestation (CNADCU) who validate the doctoral degree.

International mobility

17. The only mobility programs officially set by the Romanian Authorities are:

- the bilateral cooperation agreements with European countries, and
- academic exchanges – which can be realized with any country.

Long and short-term exchanges can be set between Romanian and foreign researchers. Financing for these programs is provided by both participating states.

18. Such awareness is very low. Concerted, centralized actions for popularizing them within the academic community are needed.

19. The most popular mobility programs for PhD students are: Erasmus, Socrates, scholarships paid by Romanian Government through National Office of Study Scholarships Abroad (ONBSS), scholarships offered by l'Agence Universitaire Francophone (AUF), Fulbright, British Council, Marie Curie, bilateral cooperation, Humboldt Fellowship; research stages offered by German governmental organizations coordinated by KOWI, such as DAAD, KAAD.

Some embassies also facilitate the academic mobility: Embassy of France, Holland (Huygens program), Japan.

20. Marie Curie Grants, bilateral cooperation, Academic exchange. Generally, foreign students can come for PhD studies in Romania.

21. PhD candidates have the opportunity to develop shared-supervision and “co-direction”/“coordination”. The requirement for these forms of coordination is the existence of an agreement between the institutions involved. This kind of coordination is available in all fields of research.

The co-supervised PhD program is in use in Romania, where the PhD candidate himself makes all arrangements.

Professional Future

22. We agree with this action.

23. European recommendations could be better promoted and implemented at the national and institutional level by cooperation between European and national institutions, including civic societies (which should also represent the opinion of PhD students and post-doctoral fellows) and through conferences and Internet information, both provided to students.

24. Research activity in Romania during the past 15 years has been systematically underfunded. Despite the EU requests to increase the budgetary contribution to research & development to 1% of GDP, presently this contribution is a tiny 0.3%. One of the immediate consequences of this politics has been that attraction of graduates towards a scientific career has substantially and alarmingly decreased.

We also ask for a reliable assessment of the scientific outcome; this means at least the introduction of the requirement to publish the results of scientific research in internationally recognized journals (ISI publications);

Gender Equality

25. There is no major gender imbalance in the academic environment. There is an imbalance favoring female PhD students given the above-mentioned poverty associated with the PhD status in Romania.

26. There are no notable differences in gender distribution in the academic field. Of course, there are specializations where an obvious imbalance in gender distribution prevails. This situation is imposed by the nature of specialization.

1. In Romania, all Universities (including some of private universities) and institutes of the Romanian Academy provide PhD training. No statistical data is available regarding the number of institutions that offer PhD degrees.

2. Eugen Simion, the president of Romanian Academy declared² that the number of supervisors in Romania is 4227, while the number of doctoral titles awarded between 2001 – 2004 was about 9448.

3. Statistical data regarding the doctoral program in Romania as a whole is not available at the moment. There exists some data at the institutional level, but not for all the Romanian institutions which organize PhD programmes. Just for University of Bucharest we counted an average age of 34 for all the doctoral candidates in function in 2004.

The basic entry requirement is MSc degree (since 2003).

4. No available data.

5. The nominal length for a full time PhD program is 4 years while for a part-time PhD program it is 7 years. Generally, full time PhD students finish their thesis within this timeframe; for part-time students, they are obliged to finish the thesis in 7 years, but is up to them to establish when they are ready to defend it publicly.

6. No available data

² Ziuva , 21.02.2004, Sistemul de doctorate din Romania (I)

7. No available data. There are no interim qualifications. Once failed, the PhD student can restart by passing a new admission exam.

8. Yes. At the University or Academy where they will receive their title.

9. Partly yes, because they get a stipend and are allowed to live in student housing), and partly not, because they can be hired as university graduate fellows).

They pay taxes for admission and for foreign language tests for admission and for defending their thesis. This latter tax is relatively high (200 €).

10. The proportion of PhD candidates who get funding for their research activity is very small. There are two major types of grants for research activity funding, at national level, for which a PhD student can apply. The National Council for Higher Education Research (CNCSIS), Ministry of Education and research (PNCDI) and Romanian Academy (GAR) offer these grants. Recently, European funding from the World Bank, European Science Foundation, FP6, Marie Curie Fellowships, D J “Joint Research is available.

11. The amount of the PhD student stipend is about 130-140 € The minimum wage at the national level is 81 € while the average wage is 213.15 €

12. A full-time PhD student pays just health care taxes from the stipend.

13. The percentage of PhD candidates that practice teaching activities during the PhD programme is quite small. Yes, they are paid as external assistants, but the stipend is very low: about 2.5 euros/hour.

14. They are allowed to teach no more than 6 hours/week.

15. Just in case of research projects of supervisor (from University or Institute of Academy), involving co-operation with industry.

16. No available data.

17. No available data.

18. Almost none. There are no government programs to support the employment of young researchers in the private or (non – private) sector.

19. In the academic sector the average salary for a young doctor is about 150-160 € in the private sector it could rise to 300-400€

20. Ad Astra has 23 individual members who graduated from almost all important universities and research institutions in the country. Ad Astra also represents about 300 Romanian researchers of all ages, from all fields, who currently work in Romania or abroad (see also www.ad-astra.ro)

