

RISK MANAGEMENT REGARDING TEACHING AT THE LEVEL OF UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS

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ABSTRACT: *Risk management is a process of identifying, analyzing and reporting on risk factors. Our approach aims at the management of risks related to internal control and is incorporated in the university departments, basic organizational component in achieving educational and research activities, at a good level. The proposed objective is to help improve university management by exploring valences provided by investigation and "controlling" of risks and exploitation of the results achieved in the decision making process. In this context, the matters that we dealt with refer to the coordinates posed by the risk management process in terms of rules, and the standards that are induced; their purpose and the responsibilities that this process involves at the level of university departments. It is also sketched a model on how to identify activities which contribute in realizing one of this institutional objectives, the risks that are associated with them and their effects, the corrective measures proposed to diminish risks.*

KEY WORDS: *risk management; university department; teaching.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M48.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been an ever increasing need to transfer the concept of risk management in the public domain. Managers of public institutions have become increasingly interested in closely monitoring the activity performed, given that they face both risk and uncertainty, their authority and responsibility being key elements in ensuring the sustainability of the institution they lead. The risk involves knowing the probability of event occurrence, (and) uncertainty means approximate knowledge of possible events, but not of the probability of event occurrence (Dănescu, 2003) or, as we say in accounting, uncertainty is a contingent risk. Besides,

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management control has been created to verify that entities follow the trend strategy required by managers (Jurchescu & Lesconi-Frumușanu, 2010).

University, as an institution of higher education organized by faculties and departments (National Education Law no. 1/2011), is meant to prepare specialists, but this mission is not without risks. It is important that the university together with its structures could demonstrate the ability to manage risks in specific circumstances and in a manner that supports achieving their goals.

The approach of risk management is confined to the academic departments, as education and scientific research are mainly product of the activity developed within these organizational components (the others having complementary, centralizing role), where curricula, position lists, course syllabuses, scientific papers, etc. are developed and analyzed of which the educational capital depends that "is the result of a co-production, the quality of the product simultaneously relying upon the quality of educational services and upon the characteristics of the beneficiary (Măcriș, 2011).

The two sides of academic work, didactic and scientific, are vital for both academic profile, as well as for an opening to international and European scientific community. Properly running the two activities requires (also) a good risk management, which, within an effective policy of internal control can provide a means of reality knowledge, risk control and combat, maintaining them within acceptable parameters, correction of errors.

The subject regarding risk management in the university departments and its means to realize it required literature review and the legislative framework which provides legal patterns for evaluating and controlling risks in education and research.

The research is qualitative, involving an interpretive approach to the subject studied and describes the relevant issues relating to risk management in the university departments regarding the segment of teaching, as well as its achievement means.

In the some time, our research is placed in the context in the context of discovering the features claimed by the decision-making in managing and limiting the risks within university departments.

The central objective of our scientific approach (improving university management by exploring valences provided by investigation and "controlling" of risks and exploitation of the results achieved in the decision making process s built on the following directions of research:

- The importance of sustaining the objectives proposed by higher education institutions by all its internal structures;
- Supporting the opportunity to implement a risk tracking and control system in university departments and its permanent update so that it corresponds to existing risk management activity within the university environment;
- Specific identification, analysis and risk mitigation ways in the two categories of activities developed within university departments, the normal activities on the position list and other educational activities

The investigation tools used in the scientific management of this approach were the following: documentation, analysis (information evaluation, ideas and key concepts recognition, establishing connections between them), synthesis (brief,

consistent and easily accessible presentation of information on the process of identifying, analysis and control of risks in the university departments).

2. THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK REGARDING RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks and their management as part of the internal control system in the public entities have raised many approaches both in literature and in the regulatory framework (concept, role, objectives, taxonomy, steps, components, responsibilities, models, etc.).

The multitude of risk perceptions (uncertain and likely event or process (Dobrotă, 2000) - with negative consequences, uncertainty of a result (Treasury, 2004), possibility or chance of something happening (Ghiță & Meniu & Vilaia & Popescu & Croitoru, 2009), threat, negative or positive obstacle, of opportunity (Evaluation Guide of Internal Control System in Public Entities, 2011), assuming more or less aware of the results of the choice made (Cecea, 2010) etc. is associated with the uniqueness of the opinion that it is present in all fields, including education [emphasis added], actively involved in the foundation of a society of conscience, truth, morality, creativity and spirit.

Uncertainty and instability of the current period entail the necessity of public entities to adapt, by continuously improving the resource management system and the adoption of efficient and effective methods and technique to ensure handling risks to a high degree of competence and accuracy (Dumbravă & Stefcu, 2013). Also, knowledge is the "weapon" of defense against risks and vulnerabilities (Morariu & Petroianu, 2013).

The general framework modern risk management is based on, globally accepted, is given by Risk Standard of Australia and November Zealand no. 4360/2004 (Ghiță et. al., 2009). According to it, risk management involves the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices for establishing the context, identifying, analyzing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and communicating the risk.

To obtain an optimum degree of order in a given context, standardization was considered appropriate, being a specific activity through which provisions for common and repeated use are established, for real or potential problems.

A standard consists of three parts (Nicolescu, 2010): a description of the standard (it refers to the defining essential features of management domain in the standard, the domain set by the standard title); general requirements on the determined directions to act for compliance with the standard; main references to representative normative acts with the applicable provisions on the standard.

At international level, the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions – INTOSAI – was meant to develop an updated framework of professional standards towards better governance (INTOSAI GOV) at the level of administrative authorities.

Internal control standards define the minimum management rules that public institutions must respect. They are designed to create a uniform and coherent management model for public institutions, and to establish a reference system for evaluating internal control systems (Nicolescu, 2010). They also provide a mechanism

by which an institution or an organizational structure within it can obtain a reasonable assurance that its objectives are protected, operational and financial reporting is reliable and meets the ethical aspect.

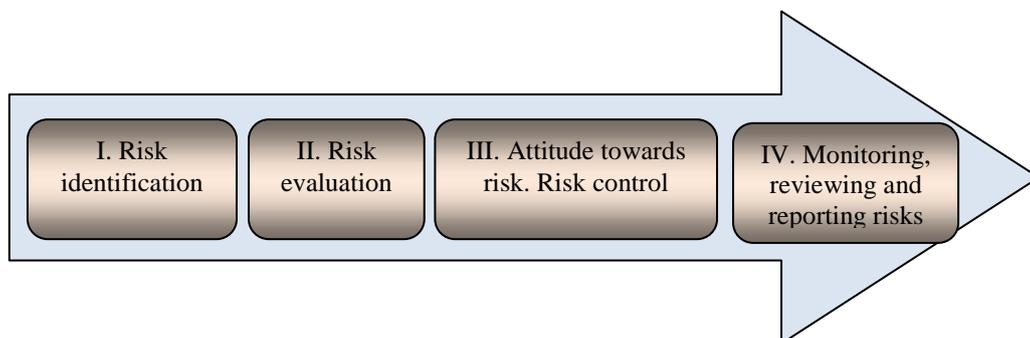
According to Internal Control Standard no. 8 entitled "Risk Management", the leader of the public entity institutes and applies a process of risk management, which will ease its efficient and effective realization of objectives by: defining its own strategy regarding risks; clearly establishing the objectives, the associated activities and the performance and result indicators; using specific instruments in order to keep the efficiency of the process; a rigorous documentation of activities; collecting and updating the risks by the risk managers; stating and applying some adequate control measures; processing the suitable reports

Risk management is a methodology that aims to provide a comprehensive risk control, allowing maintaining an acceptable level of risk exposure for the public entity, with minimal costs.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT AT THE LEVEL OF UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS: PURPOSE, ROLE AND RESPONSABILITIES

According to INTOSAI GOV 9130, the purpose of risk management is to enable the management of an entity to identify the element of uncertainty on achieving the objectives set and the associated risk (deciding actions to limit or remove it) and to have the opportunity to enhance the ability of adding value, or, in the terms used in education, to provide more efficient, economical and effective public services and to take into account values such as fairness and justice (Evaluation Guide of Internal Control System in Public Entities, 2011).

The elements of risk management process are shown in the figure below:



Suorce: Evaluation Guide of Internal Control System in Public Entities, Audit Court, 2011, p.34

Figure 1. The elements of risk management process

The basic condition for the proper functioning of the risk management departments at the university is their correct identification. Basically, risk identification by department management is fundamental to determining the optimal level of protection for a given activity. Risk identification activity involves determining the

risks that may arise during the activity without overrate or underrate them and determine their characteristics.

Risk identification involves two sub-stages: risk perception, namely awareness that a specific risk threatens the department activity, and proper identification of the risk.

Risk management is based on the analysis of risk factors that allows the management staff of the university to know the risks which are likely to affect the achievement of objectives.

In each academic structure, a responsible for risk is designated (namely the manager for university departments or a person from this structure with training in the field of risk management (The Order of the General Secretary of the Government no. 200/2016, art. 5), that need to manage existing risks, in order to achieve those objectives which are associated with risks.

Roles and responsibilities of the department management and the person in charge of risks are as follows:

- identification of the activities conducted by subordinate staff and analyze the related job descriptions (e.g. teaching activities normalized in the position list; other educational activities related to coordinating bachelor's papers, diploma papers, dissertations, student assessment, professional advice etc.; research activity; other activities in the interest of the institution);
- drawing up a list of the activities actually conducted by the subordinate staff (documentary support can be the annex to the job description, presenting in detail the activities required by fully meeting the academic standards and conducting other activities in support of education and research);
- identification and analysis of relevant objectives specific to the activities undertaken in the university departments.

The objectives of the universities can regard development of a strategy for quality in education (high level of student training, in accordance with national and European standards; knowledge and skills necessary to effective and active integration in social life and profession, permanent self-training etc.) priority support of quality in scientific research; promoting entrepreneurial university strategy; efficient financial-economic management (education programs and quality research, participation in European programs, specific services); convergence with European educational standards, etc.

Naturally, the objectives pursued at department level are integrated into the institutional objectives and can be operational (related to the efficacy of the activities), reporting (targeting at the efficiency of reporting system), of compliance (complying the regulations applicable in education and research).

◆ Identification, together with the subordinated staff, of inherent risks, which may affect the development of the activities, considering that each activity is subject to events, actions or threats from within or outside the department, and each specific objective is accomplished through the deployment of one or several activities.

It should be noted that there is a documentation model to identify risks, but they have to be permanently reported to objectives, assessed, managed and monitored by those responsible.

◆ Drafting a document containing specific objectives and their associated risks which are analyzed and finalized with the university management and approved by the rector. This document is submitted to the subordinate staff so as this should be able to make proposals that will to be included in the action plans to minimize risks.

◆ Determining, based on an assessment scale, the level of impact and probability of each of the inherent risks identified and accepted by the Rector after analysis meeting and, by combining the two variables, the level of inherent risk can be determined.

Impact can be assessed based on rating scale as follows: 1 = low level; 2 = medium level; 3 = high level, and the probability on the basis of an identical rating scale (depending on the judgment of the organization on risk analysis level, the five-level matrix can be used). The level of each variable is determined based on data existing within departments, considering the frequency with which those risks occurred in a prior period, or manifestation expectations for the next period.

Risk assessment is a system that aims, on the one hand, at analyzing the main risks identified in relation to the objectives of the academic department and, on the other hand, to ensure the existence of procedures to manage these risks. Risk assessment should consider the management of change: people change, methods change, risks change. Evaluation of risks means identifying and analyzing relevant risks in achieving the objectives, to know the way they are managed (Morariu & Suciuc & Stoian, 2008).

The procedure on risk management formalizes the documents proving fulfillment of tasks related to risk management by the department director or the person in charge of risks.

Some of the risks (especially financial ones) can be diagnosed numerically, but at the level of the analyzed structures, most of the risks have a less quantifiable perspective than that can leave room to subjectivity. Therefore, risk assessment becomes more of an art than a science (Ghiță & Briciu & Sas & Ghiță & Dobra & Tamaș, 2009). Estimating the size of the risk, the same as the identification stage, requires great judgment and certain professional experience, which makes that this operation, which is extremely important, to only be achieved by certain individuals and to differ from one university department to another, depending on the previous 'precedents'.

◆ Drafting the action plan to minimize inherent risks and discussing it with senior staff from the departments to see if by implementing them, the inherent risks will be reduced to a level that ensures certain achievement of the objectives set. The approved action plan is submitted to the subordinated staff, in order to implement actions to minimize the identified and accepted inherent risks.

Risk response planning involves a dual activity of development and determination of actions leading to enhancing opportunities and reducing threats to the department. The effectiveness of risk response planning leads directly to increase or decrease of risks to which university departments are exposed. Planning should be correlated with the level of risk severity, to be conducted in time, to be successful, to be realistic and to be assigned to somebody responsible.

Risk management involves ensuring that all the key risks are under control. This means, depending on the nature of the risk: tolerance (without the need for a measure), treatment (through preventive control - to limit / avoid effects of unwanted

risks, corrective, directive - oriented towards achieving a particular outcome, detective - identifying new unwanted situations which occurred), transfer to a structure specialized in managing certain types of risks; reducing generating activities, identification of opportunities.

◆ Determining the level of residual risk: the risk that remains after controlling which should be supported and supervised in order to be maintained within exposure limits that the university is willing to accept;

◆ Regular preparation of the Statement on the implementation of mitigation actions and residual risk assessment within departments. Analysis and reporting of risks is claimed by the need to monitor the evolution of risks (persistence, impact changes, the appearance of others) and to obtain assurance that risk management is done properly. It also allows the formulation of recommendations and proposals on the internal control system functionality. To develop an action plan to monitor risks within departments the Risk Register is organized.

Elaboration of Risk Register is a compulsory activity, fundamental to any organizational structure that can not be achieved without the direct and effective involvement of all management factors.

Monitoring and controlling risks is the final stage of tracking identified risks, monitoring residual risks and identifying new risks, ensuring the execution of risk plans and evaluating their effectiveness in reducing risks. As the activity of the department continues, new risks may appear or anticipated risks may disappear. A proper risk monitoring and control process provides the necessary information to assist adoption of effective decisions, by university department management.

Communication with department members is also important in periodically assessing risk level. Risk control may involve alternative strategies, implementing a backup plan, implementation of corrective measures or such other corrections needed to mitigate risk.

4. A MODEL ON RISK MANAGEMENT RELATED TO TEACHING AT THE LEVEL OF UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS TEACHING ACTIVITY (IDENTIFICATION, EFFECTS, CORRECTIVE MEASURES)

An efficient risk management requires (Standard 8 Risk Management), among others, to identify risks in close connection with the activities of the specific objectives whose achievement could be affected by risks materialization; identifying the threats / vulnerabilities present within the current activities of the entity; identifying the most appropriate ways of dealing with risks etc.

If we refer to the first objective, namely the strategy development for quality in education and the teaching activity associated with it (split between the rated teaching activity in the functions payroll and other teaching activities), the issues mentioned regarding the identification of activities, their risks, the effects of risk manifestation, as well as the corrective measures may be submitted (without being considered a prototype and far from exhaustive approach) as follows (table 1):

Table 1. Development of strategies for quality in education. Teaching: action, associated risks, effects and corrective measures

Activities/ Actions	Risks	Circumstances favoring risks / risk effect	Corrective measures
1. Direct teaching activity standardized in the position list			
1A. Educational process design			
a. curriculum development	- incompatibility in relation to labor market needs and specific quality standards	- low correlation with labor market requirements - maintaining outdated subjects - erroneous structure by categories of subjects - failure to comply with the requirements on targeted skills, the ratio lectures / seminars, laboratory, practical activities, the average number of hours per week, number of credits per semester; - passive attendance to committee for evaluation and quality as assurance (ignorance of quality standards for curricula)	- conducting, through and with the support of the Information, counseling and career guidance center a study on labor market requirements - correlating the contents of the curricula with the existing ones in academic environment in the country and not only - checking the requirements demanded by the need to ensure higher education quality - an open attitude to the proposals made by the participants in committees for evaluation and quality assurance (especially employers and graduates) – analyzing the proposals within the collective
b. drawing up the position list	- financial constraints; - incorrectly drawing up the report	- overload of teaching quota - mismatch between the teaching quota content and the qualification of the teaching staff - uncorrelation to the curriculum	- identifying the opportunities to avoid overloading the teaching and research quota - attracting doctoral candidates - a rigorous policy of human resource recruitment after detailed analysis of the way of filling teaching positions for each study program - setting reasonable deadlines for completing the position lists so that the heads of department and study program managers can verify the preparation of position lists
c. developing course syllabuses	- incomplete or incorrect entry of data in the course syllabus	- not specifying all the requirements (objectives, basic thematic content, the distribution of teaching hours, assessment system, minimal references, minimum performance standard - inadequacy between course syllabus content and the current requirements - outdated references - overlapping of thematic content	- setting reasonable deadlines for the preparation of course syllabuses and sending them to academics in advance - checking the course syllabus in terms of form and content by the study program manager with the head of department and provide comments in time to the lecture and seminar holders.

1B. The educational process			
a. elaborating didactic materials (course, seminars, laboratory, practical courses)	- incomplete development of didactic materials	- absence or failure to update course, seminar and laboratory materials - addressing different thematic content than it is mentioned in the course syllabus - academics' conservatism / resistance to change; - content which is inadequate for knowledge society and economy and for labor market requirements	- establishing clear rules on mandatory development of didactic materials, conditioning any promotion of their existence - verifying the compliance with thematic content mentioned in the course syllabus and its suitability to current needs, conducted by the study program manager and the head of department through regular / monthly meetings with the students
b. covering the full content of subjects specified in the course syllabus	- partial covering of the contents of the subjects specified in the course syllabus	- failure to comply with the time distribution of teaching activities - ignoring the teaching of some thematic content or teaching them partially	- verifying the compliance with time distribution of teaching activities and their content through survey, discussions with the parties involved - verifying the compliance with teaching activities specified in the course syllabus and their appropriate thematic content
c. use of effective teaching methods	- mismatch between teaching methods and current teaching needs and requirements	- predominant use of traditional teaching methods; - ineffective teaching technologies	- conducting regular training seminars for teachers in the use of modern teaching methods and techniques, student-oriented - promoting a motivating learning environment, generating high performance, well integrated into the European, national and community economic and cultural environment
d. assessment activities	- subjectivity in assessment	- major share of one evaluation form (written, oral) - assessment errors (indulgence, severity, halo, contrast effect, anticipation effect, logical error, etc.) - overcrowding examination activities in a given period	- establishing clear rules on the proportion of assesment forms and verifying their compliance, the head of department moderating any disagreements - drawing up a timetable for conducting student assessment activities to ensure constant activity during the examination period - discussing "misconduct" with the teachers and students involved - school performance understood as individual progress and added value
1C. Monitoring the educational process			
a. fulfillment of standards and performance indicators for achieving / maintaining accreditation of	- partial fulfillment of performance indicators	- excessive increase in the ratio of academics with higher rank (Associate Professor, Professor) and other categories - mismatch between the specialization of academics	- limitation of high level promotions and their stimulation for assistant professor and lecturer positions - rigor in the recruitment of human resources for correlation with current and future needs - an active and effective policy for

a specialization		and the subjects taught	recruitment of students
b. the situation of graduates' employment in the speciality field	- incompleteness of data on the career paths of graduates	- failure to update the contact details of graduates; - absence or incomplete existence of database on employment of graduates; - maintaining weak ties with graduates; - insufficient number of persons engaged in current activities;	- drawing up a database on the students' career paths of their contact details; - establishing strict deadlines on regular updating of databases; - accountability of academics on the need to maintain a connection with former graduates
1. Other didactic activities			
Guidance in elaboration of bachelor's paper, diploma paper, dissertation / doctoral theses	- formalism and repetition	- graduates' disproportionate options reported to academics - common, repetitive, obsolete research themes; - plagiarism	- changing internship regulations so that at least a certain percentage of the proposed themes differ from those of the previous year - obligation of the coordinator to verify compliance with the ethics in the preparation of university graduation papers
Other educational activities included in the curriculum – students' internships	- mismatch between internships and practical training needs and labor market requirements	- absence of a study on the needs of internships; - insufficient collaboration with the practice environment - narrow range of activity areas "available" for internships - formalism in completing the steps required for the internship - ineffective communication with socioeconomic community members	- organizing regular roundtables with employers in the area for whom internships are to be performed - a real and effective educational partnership with the practical activity; - appointing academics responsible for internships - expanding collaboration to conduct internships - roundtables with potential internship coordinators organized by employers
Consultin, mentoring students within the credit transfer system	- development of activities in leaps, depending on deadlines	- unevenness of students attending consultations; - overlapping of consultation program with other activities - delays in the preparation and submission of equivalence sheets	- preparation of individual sheets of the students' attendance of examinations and their progress - flexible consultation program (at least 2 times per week) - establishing deadlines for preparation of equivalence sheets to be checked by the study program manager
Participation in councils and commissions in the interest of education	- reduced impact on improving teaching activities	- overlapping activities and overloading the existing staff - lack of ahead planning for both meetings and the topics discussed for proper documentation; - establishing measures inconsistent with the current state of knowledge and development in the field	- correlation and complementarity of teaching activities with those of scientific research - proposing a schedule for running councils and commissions in the interest of education - transmitting the agenda and the documents under discussion at least a few days before the meeting

Internal control can provide only reasonable assurance of achieving the set objectives, and not an absolute one, inclusively by risk management system, regardless of how it is designed and implemented. The probability of achieving the set objectives is affected by a number of internal and external factors which were not and could not be taken into account in the design of internal control system (Evaluation Guide of Internal Control System in Public Entities, 2011) human errors (negligence, carelessness); abuse of authority expressed by those responsible for management; inadequate control procedures; frequent changes in the entity's internal or external environment, etc.

Risk management process should be a permanent one, because every day new risks may appear and they should be controlled before becoming unstoppable. The objective of risk management is the location in an area within limits where risk is tolerable (lower consequences to the maximum possible limit) and cost is reasonable (lower cost to profitability limit) (Ceocsa, 2010).

The head of the department need to ensure that risk is managed effectively, that risks affecting their business are reasonably identified, to properly and effectively monitor the measures to reduce/eliminate the risks. Naturally, these tasks can be accomplished if all academics perform their tasks according to the route induced by risk management and transmit possible identified risks to the risk responsible factors.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Without doubt, in any university, a system of risk management is established in order to ensure protection, certainty of information quality and quality of application practice, compliance and motivation of actions intended to help achieving their strategic objectives. Under this system, inclusively at the level of structural components, the balance between risk aversion orientation and risk acceptance must be identified.

Universities and their structures face a variety of risks and, for their management, it is important that these risks are identified and assessed and an acceptable risk tolerance should be determined in the order of occurrence probability and impact imminence they can produce, by applying appropriate control tools.

Identification of risks and actions aimed at minimizing them are able to contribute to guiding academics in new and difficult tasks, adopting proper conduct in relation to the strengths or weaknesses; an act of reason, in the sense of understanding the importance of the work performed and the fact that efforts, difficulties or performance are not ignored. Establishment and adaptation to the specific of universities and departments of a risk management system, able to identify, assess and prevent the multitude of risks they are exposed to, it is a difficult process, even more as the department activity is very complex and generates huge responsibilities.

The process of developing a risk management system in the course of internal control is one that never knows a final end. It will permanently require improvements, imposed by the dynamics of internal and external environment and continuous adjustments. A good risk management system is flexible, able to adapt to the realities of the environment in which the entity operates, and which, in reasonable limits, can

achieve the management objectives of the entity with a high probability and in good conditions. We consider particularly useful the elaboration of a proper risk management model in each higher education institution, as risk management process must constantly relate to the objectives of the institution and the activities their achievement requires, established by a strategy specific to educational environment.

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