

# MILITARY STUDENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

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**Abstract:** *society as a whole is subject to extensive and complex reform processes. The reform and the extent of this phenomenon are global and have spread to the higher education system in Romania. the military higher education reform has been made in terms of Romania's Euro-Atlantic integration, leading to a change the format from the mainly vocational training, focused on the career training of officers towards an academic type of education in which the preparation for a military career is finalized through a license and can provide the opportunity to reconvert to another profession.*

*Also, in the context of increased complexity and size of the higher education military institutions, the provision of financial resources and a specific regulatory framework significantly affect the quality of the academic education.*

*In this respect, the paper examines the dynamic interdependence between the military system of higher education and quality assurance of education for primary beneficiaries - military students, and the strategy of the proposed changes is a bidirectional, from bottom up and vice versa.*

**Keywords:** higher education reform, military student, professional performance

## **1. Higher military education reform in Romania**

Military institutions of higher education in Romania, "Carol I" National Defence University, Military Technical Academy, "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Force Academy, "Mircea cel Batran" Naval Academy, "Henri Coandă" Air Force Academy and Military Medical Institute, are part of the national education system. The study, although it may be extended, is focused on those three categories of academies of the Romanian Army forces whose mission and goals are similar: graduate training officers in military science and information for the Land Forces, Navy and Air Force and other internal and external users; the design, organization and conduct of

educational processes in conjunction with training needs and priorities of the operational structures of the national defense system [1].

Military education, as defined by the Human Resources Management Department, it state education which is integrated into national education, having it's own identity and personality, compatible with the educational systems of the armies of NATO member states.

Perhaps more than ever we are witnessing a broad transformation and reform process in all institutional areas. National educational system and therefore military educational is no exception. Bologna process reform imposed military university education in most European countries. Implementation and quality assurance objective, adopting a system based on cycles, promoting mobility, recognition of qualifications, lifelong learning or to achieve the European Higher Education Area will achieve sustainable development of society at large.

The main goal of the concept of military Romanian education transformation is the achievement of an efficient system in line with training and professional development needs of military personnel and full compatibility of national education with those from the Euro-Atlantic areas.

He needs to implement the Bologna Process found the higher military education in a real crisis of the system. Thus it failed to achieve a unique control system, vertically structured and independent use. Existing structures were and are still undersized, broken, scattered and subordinate to the beneficiary. Increasing complexity and size of military higher education institutions in terms of number of curricula (Table1) and the number of students revealed other issues: there are difficulties in recruiting civil scholars due to the block of job appliance competitions; also for the specialized military personnel, these positions (university teaching or military drill) are not attractive because of the wage offer. Also the reduce of military grade equivalent teaching positions led to premature exist from the system of a large number of experienced teachers who had no available time to ensure a normal transfer of powers.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Specialization</b>
“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Force Academy	Military Management Faculty	Organization Management
		Economic and Financial Management
		Public Administration
“Mircea cel Bătrân” Naval Academy	Military Marine Faculty	Navigation, hydrographic and marine equipment

	Civil Marine Faculty	Electromechanics
		Navigation
		Electromechanics
		Engineering and port management
“Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy	Management Aeronautics Faculty	Organization Management
		Air Traffic Management
		Aviation Management

**Table 1** Universities structure and specialization

Student’s satisfaction level with the main elements of the educational process, but also to living and training offered by the academy is a barometer of the quality of military education. Thus, if the entry in the army is no longer a guarantee of a long career and wages are no longer considered far as motivating, almost 40% of students [3] declared that they would do the same choice, if they are again at the end of class XII.

In terms of preparation process, without denying substantially the teachers competence, students declare a relatively significant percentage (38,5%) dissatisfied content of teaching. There is also a relative stat of general dissatisfaction with military training, considered far too theorized.

In terms of living conditions offered by the academy, 70% of students say they are satisfied with the provided accommodation, however, 73,95 % are unhappy with the observance of free time and 53,5% are unhappy with food quality.

All these aspects shape a picture of a relatively unhappy military student, regarding strictly educational aspects and important elements of student life military. The need to reform the Romanian military higher education in the context of the Bologna requirements must first be recognized by all decision makers in education as a vector for future military specialist at the company’s current and future requirements. The establishments, disestablishment, restructure or reshape of the military educational institutions, in hope that if changing the name and status of institution, the problems will solve themselves does nothing but aggravate the crisis of the system.

## **2. Challenges regarding the military student**

Military higher education reform should not mean a change from bad to good, but a good system in certain circumstances, a good system in radically changed circumstances [4].

Scientific basis of reform must be closely related to educational aims embodied in the model graduate (Figure 1). Aside “knowing”, “knowing what to do” and “knowing to be “ Romanian military students must find the answers to simple questions such as “What to expect and from whom? What should I lead and from whom? How do I get there?”. The answers to these questions should find them with the implementation of the directions of development of institutions embodied in the Strategic Plan. Of course, these directions must be in full compliance with requirements imposed by European higher education reform and NATO standards in relation to training and professional development requirements of military personnel.

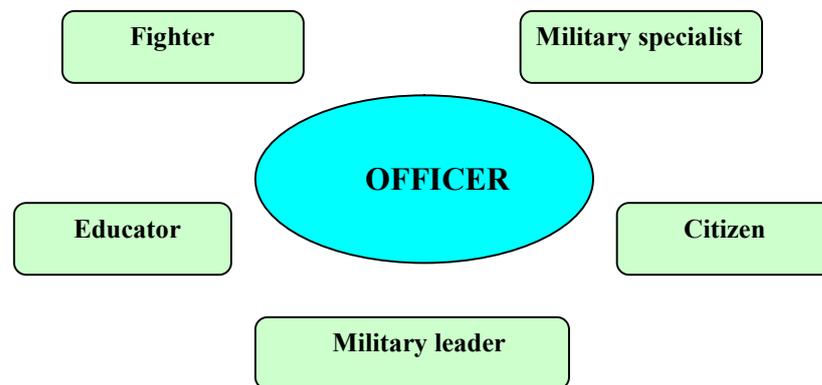


Fig. 1 Graduate Model

### ***A high-level training***

Training of the officers is made by combining two components: academic preparation and military training. Academic preparation is done in a recognized specialty, with complete compliance with national and international standards. Military training is conducted strictly in accordance with military standards and should not constitute part of the evaluation. License-Master- Doctorate scheme should be dynamic. Currently, none of the three categories of forces academy does not run a doctoral program and implementing the Bologna second cycle is only the beginning stage of evaluation and/or authorization. Creating and promoting a culture of quality military education system, with students involved and two other key drivers to ensure the success of education : a leadership “in action” to address the vision, objectives and purpose set of decision makers and a teaching staff (civilian and military instructors) competent, experienced and motivated [5].

### ***Internationalization preparation***

One of the solutions to implement Bologna reforms aimed at good practices worth of military practice in a globalized environment. Despite a large number of bilateral or multilateral agreements with institutions of similar profile in the European Union stages of preparation of students in these institutions and Romanian troops and the Romanian foreign students in

military academies are a rarity. Except for contributions to scientific meetings and sports competitions for students and military application we can not talk about military stages of training not even within Trilateral Romanian But through an open policy of partnership we will talk about the fittest, most specialized and qualified young officer. Military student should form a „genuine European consciousness”. This will be possible with dynamic program Erasmus military „ when prospective student-officers in the EU will follow some courses in a military academy in one of the 27 states of the community .

***Provide academic autonomy and freedom in teaching and research act***

The three military higher education institutions are subject of military structures – types of military forces. And advancing DMRU Training and Doctrine Directorate and the General Staff have areas of competence and responsibility among military education. In this regard develop and monitor implementation of strategies, policies and regulations in military education [6], coordinates the design and update the regulatory framework specific conduct military education [7].

It is desirable that it be directly subordinate to the Ministry of Defense so it may intervene in political activity only through military academy education politics. Military higher education institution relationships with other military structures should be limited to a specific actual status of autonomy.

Today, the Army General Staff has requested the preparation of both by the Air Force Academy and the Army Academy of a number of artillery and air defense missiles specialty officers. Tomorrow will be formed to choose the institution for professional officers subordinate ground forces or the academy. It forms an initial manifestation of institutional competition in military education system from which will come out a successful military student.

On the axle should be included the separation of research and educational management and operational control of the military academy. Currently, these institutions have the status of military units, evaluated by the various echelons of common above criteria and standards operational similar units. Control functions are senior officers at the end of their careers on the verge of retirement. A positioning structure that would allow leadership to consider this feature a platform to promote a new stage of his career, with experience in operational units, a graduate foreign educational institution, should be one and the same reasons motivating for students to stay continuously connected to concrete future career aspirations. There could be a model student and a credibility factor for teachers.

***Development of scientific research put into job training officers***

Scientific university research should exploit the potential of both teachers and students, in order to increase the completeness of research and educational process in a unitary space-learning research.

Military institutions of higher education are partly specialized structures performing fundamental and applied research, but also business advice and scientific expertise through scientific research centers and student circles. Training and financing institutions are fundamental roles of the scientific research. Military scientific research is subsidized by the Ministry of Defense, but there is the possibility to attract research findings (grants). In 2009, the percentage of the budget for scientific research (decreased by one third compared to 2008) was 4.5% [8] and the number of national research funding attracted by the military academies of the categories of forces in the year 2008 was 8 [9].

Extremely low participation in research projects, practical absence of the European Research Area, are current economic and financial realities, outlines a research underfunded, which hinders approaches "excellence". Necessary material and technical basis of teaching and research is lagging behind in terms of the latest technological breakthroughs, and this has direct implications on the level of scientific substantiation of the training process of officers. However, research partnerships with similar institutions in the European area and beyond, have considerably increased the scientific value of specialized publications and communications sessions, builds the research activity of teachers and students.

Engaging in greater manner both teachers and students in research projects and programs funded national and international and ensuring the primacy of this area through the provision of measures regarding specialized personnel and finance imposed standards of higher education institutions will provide guarantees of quality modern education and training of future indispensable officers.

Nowadays military student, the future professional officer is a hybrid of the reform: rather a recipient of knowledge transfer than of the transfer of knowledge; has a solid piece of knowledge both in terms of academic preparation component and military component, but has formed a leadership style able to find effective solutions tailored to the challenges; he knows a foreign language, but has not developed the capacity to adapt, understand the complex and dynamic environment; has a secured job after graduation, but is not motivated to study, linked to future career aspirations, animated by the desire to win; he obtained a bachelor degree that offers the minimal chances of being exploited in a future profession, other than military; he has developed the capacity to exercise educational role, but has not identified some models to refer to.

### **3. Conclusions and future research**

Practices and proposed solutions may be considered by professionals established to create policy reform aimed at creating a kind of higher military educational institution of reference and an international player, in order to train professional officers for both defense system and public policy national security and for foreign beneficiaries.

With a relatively small number of students, but many specialties', the unit costs of training officers are high and support solutions for the purposes of funding based on student training under civilian troll and raising to follow the Bologna second cycle graduates of universities and civil and a rethinking of the role of R&D.

Academies accept challenges functioning in a competitive environment (national and European), but they should have the managerial freedom, a fair financing scheme and fewer regulatory rigid frames. Otherwise, the risk is placed in a cooperative and competitive disadvantage.

Military student - as responsible for their own knowledge construction – will go through its route path as educational PDCA cycle: Plan set goals and processes necessary to deliver results in line with the policy o the institution (graduate model) implement, monitor and act to improve further performance, bringing a substantial contribution to the achievement of military higher education focused on their needs.

Changes in the system must continue for the full integration of military academies in the dynamic forces of categories defined by the European Bologna process. It should not be overlooked that any change implemented in the system may fail without the conviction of the participation, of all its components: students, teachers, beneficiaries and leadership.

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