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METHODOLOGY AND GUIDELINES ON EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

PART II

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METHODOLOGY AND GUIDELINES ON EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

PART II
GUIDELINES ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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List of Acronyms

A	Accreditation
NAQ	National Authority for Qualifications
PA	Provisional operating authorisation
ARACIP	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education
ARACIS	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
QA	Quality assurance
IQA	Internal quality assurance
QAAC	Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning
EEP	Expert Evaluation Panel
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
PE	Periodic evaluation
EQAR	European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
PAA	Periodic institutional audit assessment
HEP	Higher education provider
C	Confidence
DL	Distance learning
FTE	Full-time learning
PTL	Part-time learning
HEI	Higher education institution
IODS	Institution organising doctoral studies
PI	Performance indicator
HR	High confidence
HE	Higher education
MoE	Ministry of Education
LC	Lack of confidence
ASP	Academic studies programme
IASP	Integrated academic studies programme
IER	Internal evaluation report
NRQHE	National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education
NRA	ARACIS National Register of Assessors
RNE-S	National Register of Assessors - Students
S	Standard
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
IQAS	Internal quality assurance system

1 FOREWORD

1.1 Legislative framework

The external quality assessment process of the HEI is based on the provisions of the following legislative instruments:

a) Law of National Education No. 1/2011, as amended and supplemented;
b) Romanian Government Emergency Ordinance No. 75/2005 on quality assurance in education, approved with amendments and additions by Law No. 87/2006, as amended and supplemented;
c) Romanian Government Decision No 1.418 of 11 October 2006 approving *the external evaluation methodology, standards, reference standards and list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)*, published in the Official Journal of Romania, Part I, No. 865 of 23 October 2006, as amended and supplemented.

1.2 Objectives of the Guidelines

The Guidelines on the External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) outline the specific requirements and procedures for external institutional evaluation. The main objective of these Guidelines is to continuously improve the quality of HEI in a way that leads to excellence and innovation in education, not just by ensuring that HEI meets the minimum mandatory requirements for quality education.

The procedures and standards included in these Guidelines are in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (QA) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This approach to QA is outlined in the document produced by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and endorsed in 2015 at the Yerevan Conference by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the EHEA[1]. ESG emphasise the importance of learning outcomes, are student-centred, ensure transparency of CA systems and processes and take into account the diversity of HEIs.

The procedures and standards included in these Guidelines take into account current developments and challenges of the Romanian SI system. These include the rapid changes in the size and diversity of the HE sector in Romania, both in terms of student numbers and the range of university degree programmes on offer, and the need to constantly adapt this offer to meet the needs of students, the economic environment and society. The guidelines aim to keep CA flexible and adaptable in the context of a system whose characteristics and priorities are constantly changing.

[1] The first Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) were adopted in 2005 at the Ministerial Conference on Bologna follow-up in Bergen (Norway).

The guidelines for the external evaluation of HEIs are based on the principle that quality assurance is primarily the responsibility of the HEI. Given that the objective of external evaluation of HEI is to raise standards and promote a culture of quality, these Guidelines are closely related to the Guidelines for the External Quality Assessment of Degree Programmes, the Guidelines for the External Quality Assessment of Masters Courses, the Guidelines for the External Quality Assessment of Doctoral Studies and the Guidelines for the External Quality Assessment of Psycho-pedagogical Training Programmes.

The processes, criteria, standards and indicators included in these Guidelines correspond to the assessment of quality assurance of HEIs for accreditation and re-accreditation following periodic reviews.

These Guidelines will be used in particular by staff who are part of the institutional quality assurance structures (QAAC) and by staff who contribute to the drafting of Internal Evaluation Reports for external evaluations.

These Guidelines serve as a tool to guide HEI staff in management structures in the development of quality assurance policies and procedures at all levels.

The provisions of these Guidelines are adopted by the expert assessors registered with the RNE. Expert evaluators assigned to external evaluation missions will find details of the different roles and actions for which they are responsible at each of the stages of the CA evaluation outlined in these guidelines. They will also find the criteria, standards and performance indicators they will use to assess the quality of the HEI activities. These criteria, standards and performance indicators are those that the HEIs will use to prepare the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) and those that the ARACIS Board will use to validate the report submitted by the Evaluation Expert Committee following the visit to the HEI.

For the purposes of these guidelines, a higher education institution (HEI) is an organisation providing higher education education that is provisionally authorised or accredited and that requests ARACIS to initiate the external evaluation procedure.

The organisation interested in providing education services, hereinafter referred to as the *organisation*, is a legal person that includes educational activities in its statute and undergoes the authorisation process to become an education provider.

2 Specific requirements for the external evaluation of higher education institutions

The external quality assessment HEI meets the following quality assurance requirements:

a) assure the university communities, beneficiaries and the general public that the HEI seeking accreditation/maintaining accreditation is able to organise and deliver university degree programmes and demonstrates that it meets the minimum quality standards set out in the *External Evaluation Methodology, Standards, Benchmarks and the list of Performance Indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*;
b) promote and commit the HEI to continuous improvement of academic quality, affirmed by results in education and research;
c) support HEIs to develop quality management and culture and to demonstrate, through relevant evidence and documentation, their status;
d) encourage HEIs to self-evaluate and cooperate in the external evaluation process to ensure and increase quality;
e) encourage HEI to cooperate with other higher education institutions in achieving, monitoring and comparing academic quality;
f) identify and officially inform about any attempt to operate a university degree programme that does not have external quality evaluations carried out within the legal deadline, according to the *ARACIS Methodology*, or operates without **MoE** approval.

The external institutional evaluation focuses on three main issues, as follows:

a) The *effectiveness of the* HEI's *internal quality assurance structures* (institutional capacity) and the extent to which the content and quality of study programmes are regularly reviewed by the HEI. It also examines whether the recommendations made during previous evaluations (internal and external) are being implemented and what their effect is. The purpose of this review is to provide public information about the quality of activities in any higher education institution.
b) *Accuracy, completeness and credibility of the information* that HEIs publish about the quality of their degree programmes and the degrees they award on graduation. This provides information on the level of confidence that can be placed in information material published by the HEI and emphasises the usefulness of the information for students and other stakeholders.
c) *Internal quality assurance* procedures, *which* are analysed by *checking documents related to quality assurance within the HEI*, i.e. by *thematic evaluation of some activities* (e.g. how the quality of career and professional guidance services for students is ensured at university level, what is the internal quality assurance mechanism for examinations at department and faculty level, etc.). The external evaluation aims to demonstrate the validity

and credibility of the information provided by the HEI under the internal quality assurance process.

The external institutional evaluation looks at several specific issues:

a) Verification of internal quality assurance and continuous quality improvement procedures, especially at the level of university degree programmes;
b) Publicly available information on the content and quality of degree programmes and graduation standards;
c) Internal information management system and its contribution to internal quality monitoring and compliance with quality standards;
d) Design, use and publication of information on university study programmes;
e) The academic standards proposed by the HEI for the achievement of learning outcomes and academic qualifications on graduation from degree programmes;
f) Students' learning experience and the application of the principle of student-centredness, which ensures access to a distinctive academic qualification through higher education programmes;
g) Continuous improvement of academic standards in teaching, learning and assessment and scientific research;
h) Peer review by persons of the same level of training and competence as a tool for internal quality assurance;
i) Quality assurance of faculty, including evaluation criteria and how teaching-learning effectiveness is monitored, improved and rewarded by HEI;
j) How the HEI raises the quality level of all teaching, research and managerial activities in relation to the degrees of achievement of the performance indicators awarded in the previous evaluation.

External evaluation at institutional level mainly involves the following methodological aspects:

a) the use of the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) as a key document, which should be reflective and evaluative;
b) the responsibility of the evaluated HEIs to provide the ARACIS evaluation experts with all relevant information;
c) flexibility in the organisation of the external evaluation mission, so that the work of ARACIS expert evaluators does not disrupt the smooth running of the teaching process;
d) mutual respect, so that the evaluation process takes place in a collegial atmosphere;
e) direct access by the expert assessors to data and documents supporting all the claims and statements in the Internal Quality Assessment Report, provided to the ARACIS expert assessors and to all interested parties.

Following the external evaluation, ARACIS provides public information on at least the following issues related to:

a) taking as a reference the *criteria*, *standards* and *performance indicators*, as well as the *specific standards* of the fields/programmes of university study, ARACIS assesses the extent to which the expected learning outcomes (set by the study programme provider itself) can actually be achieved in the respective HEI in terms of the effectiveness of the *proposed* or, where applicable, *ongoing* curriculum and in relation to the learning outcomes achieved by students;
b) the *quality of the learning environment*, which covers the effectiveness of the teaching-learning-assessment process, academic support and student progress towards learning outcomes;
c) *institutional capacity*, as demonstrated by the HEI through its coherent organisation, the existence of an adequate management and administration system necessary for a stable functioning, and the human resources on which it can rely to achieve its mission and objectives.

3 Qualifications awarded to higher education institutions and degrees of achievement of performance indicators/benchmarks

The grades awarded in the external evaluations of the HEI are:
a) High Confidence (HC);
b) Confidence (C);
c) Lack of Confidence (LC).

The degrees of achievement of the performance indicators/reference are:
d) for performance indicators (PI) - met/partially met/not met;
e) for benchmark indicators (IP Ref.) - met/partially met/not applicable.

All decisions on external evaluation ratings take into account the level of compliance with the criteria, standards and performance indicators used for the evaluation and the achievements of the HEI.

4 Objectives of external quality assurance of higher education institutions

4.1 Provisional operating authorisation - the first stage of the accreditation procedure

Provisional operating authorisation of an organisation interested in providing education services at higher education level may be granted, by Government decision, at least 6 (six) months before the beginning of a new academic year, if the organisation has initiated at least three bachelor's degree programs, which have been favorably approved to operate provisionally by ARACIS and approved by the Ministry of Education. The exception to this provision is for denominational higher education organisations, which may be authorised to operate provisionally if they have initiated at least one bachelor's degree programme in the theological field, approved to operate provisionally on the proposal of ARACIS by the Ministry of Education.

The provisional operating licence entitles the education provider to carry out the education process and to organise admission to studies.

The education provider that has been authorised to operate provisionally also has the right to manage teaching, non-teaching and research staff in accordance with its own development strategy and to participate in national and international programmes, in accordance with the law.

bachelor's degree programmes authorised to operate provisionally are usually monitored annually by ARACIS.

If, during the monitoring of bachelor's degree programmes authorised to operate provisionally, it is found that after the first two years of operation the standards envisaged for authorisation are not met, and the necessary measures for accreditation have not been taken, the ARACIS Board may propose to the Ministry of Education that the provisional authorisation for operation of the higher education structure concerned be withdrawn.

4.2 Accreditation of higher education institutions

In order to apply for accreditation, an HEI authorised to operate provisionally must have at least three (3) accredited degree programmes and submit a complete list of the bachelor's degree programmes it organises.
After ARACIS validates the HEI application for accreditation, it submits the Internal Evaluation Report for external evaluation for accreditation. The IER must be structured on the basis of the assessment requirements mentioned in the ARACIS Guide.
In the case of accredited HEIs, the accreditation of bachelor's degree programmes, integrated degree programmes, known in the EHEA as *joint programmes*, or new master/doctoral degree areas is carried out separately from the institutional evaluation.

If the external evaluation for accreditation awards the rating of *high confidence* or *confidence*, the evaluated HEI is accredited for a period of 5 (five) years.

During the validity of the accreditation, ARACIS monitors the HEI in order to verify the progress made following the recommendations mentioned in the previous external evaluation.

After accreditation, the next external evaluations of the HEI will be periodic evaluations.

In summary, the process of accreditation of higher education institutions is as follows:

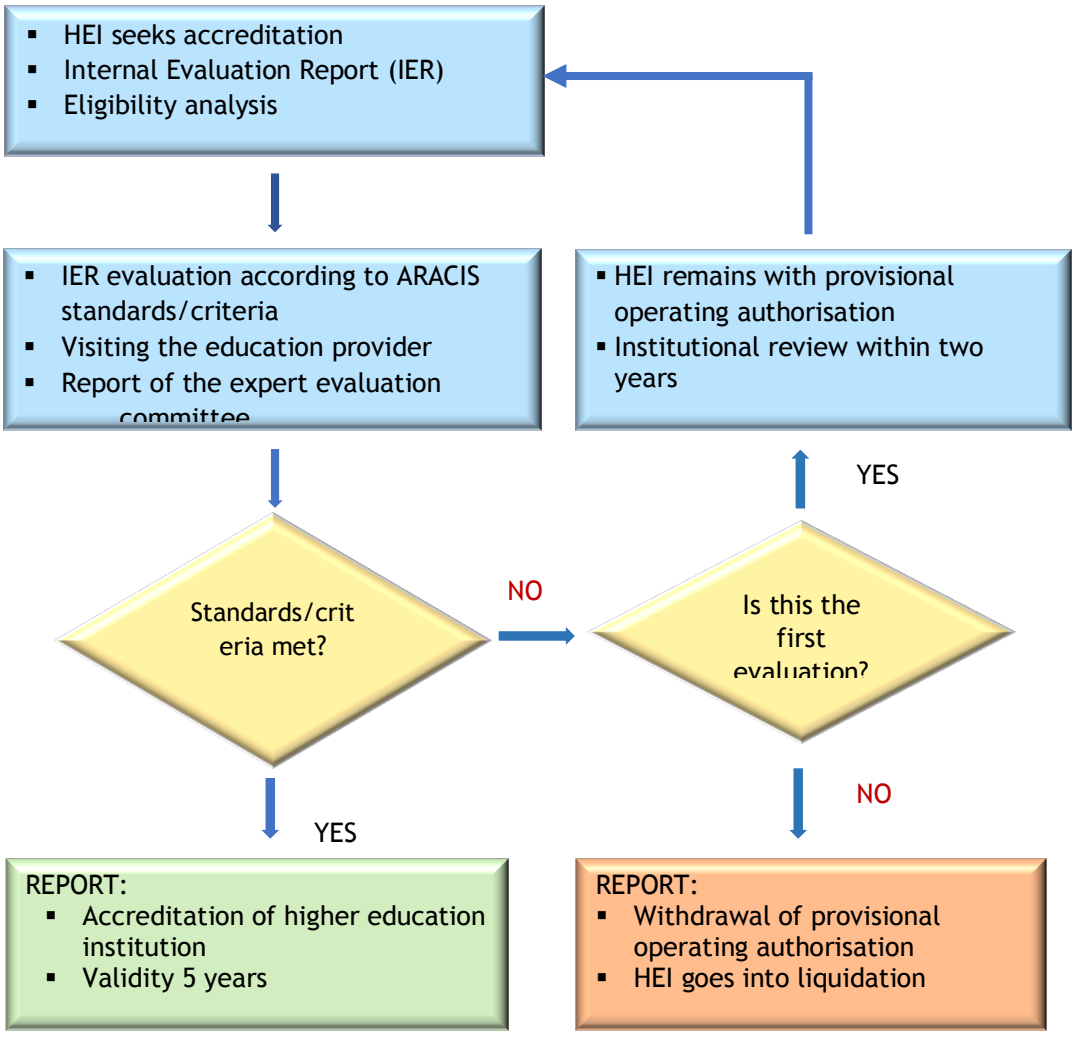


Figure 1 Accreditation of higher education institutions

HEIs may request an external evaluation before the expiry of the period of validity of the accreditation in compliance with the legal provisions.

The accredited HEI has the right to organise admission and the educational process, to organise graduation exams (bachelor's, master's, doctorate), to issue diplomas, certificates and other educational documents recognized by the Ministry of Education.

If the external evaluation for accreditation is given a rating of *no confidence*, the HEI shall request a new external evaluation within two (2) years of the issuance of the report finding non-compliance with the quality standards. HEIs that are found to have failed to meet quality standards in two consecutive institutional

evaluations are subject to liquidation, in compliance with the provisions of GEO no. 75 of 2005 on quality assurance in education.

4.3 Regular evaluation of the HEI

Periodic evaluation applies to accredited HEIs that apply to ARACIS for continued accreditation.

Periodic evaluations of bachelor's degree programmes, integrated degree programmes, Master's degree programmes and doctoral degree programmes are carried out separately from the periodic evaluations of the HEI.

The periodic evaluation of the IODS will usually be carried out as part of the institutional evaluation of the coordinating higher education institution of that IODS. In order to maintain accreditation, each doctoral school is evaluated as part of the regular IODS evaluation process.

If the periodic evaluation of the HEI is awarded a rating of ***high confidence*** or ***confidence***, the evaluated HEI maintains its accreditation for a period of 5 (five) years.
If the periodic evaluation gives a rating of ***no confidence***, the HEI may continue its activities but is obliged to request a new external evaluation from the quality assurance agency that carried out the previous evaluation within two (2) years of the report stating that the quality standards have not been met. HEIs that are found to have failed to meet quality standards in two consecutive institutional evaluations are subject to liquidation, in compliance with the provisions of GEO no. 75 of 2005 on quality assurance in education.

In summary, the process of periodic evaluation of higher education institutions is as follows:

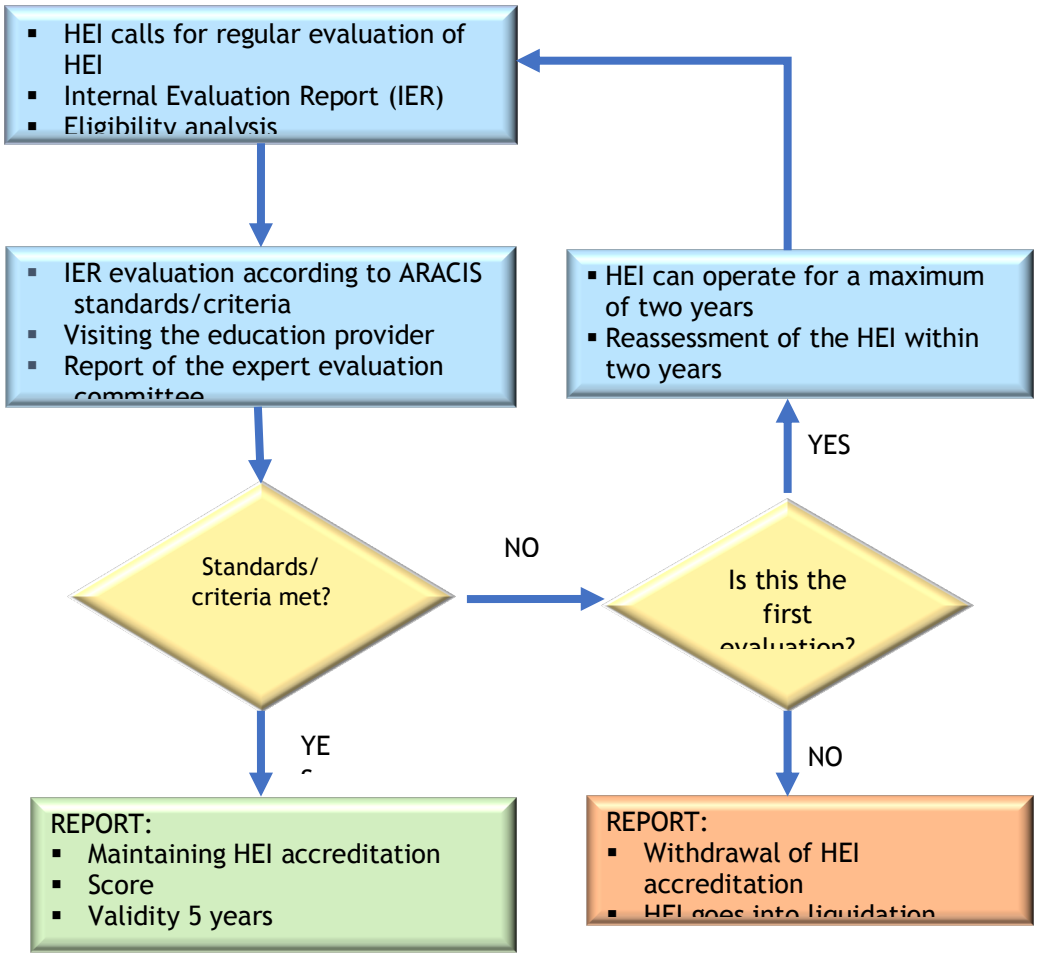


Figure 2 Periodic evaluation of higher education institutions

5 Stages in the process of external evaluation of higher education institutions

In the external evaluation of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) the following steps are taken:

Stage 1. Request for external evaluation and preparation of the Internal Evaluation/Self-Assessment Report (IER);

Stage 2. Analysis of the EIR and visit of the Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP) to the HEI - at the premises and/or other locations where teaching and/or research activities are organised, and preparation of the EEP Report;

Stage 3. Analysis and validation of the EEP Report by ARACIS, formulation of recommendations, adoption of the grade, drafting of the opinion

proposed to the Ministry of Education after completion of the procedures for resolving any complaints or appeals;

Stage 4. Externally assessed HEI monitoring.

5.1 Stage I. Request for external evaluation and preparation of the Internal Evaluation/Self-Assessment Report

At this stage, the institution applies to ARACIS for accreditation or periodic evaluation, followed by the preparation of the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) of the HEI.

5.1.1 Request for external evaluation

To request an external evaluation, the HEI sends an application to ARACIS stating:

a) *HEI name*;
b) the *objective of the evaluation*: accreditation or periodic evaluation;
c) the *current status* of the HEI (authorised to operate provisionally or accredited);
d) the *date, objective and outcome of* the last external evaluation of the HEI subject to evaluation, if applicable;
e) *a list of all HEI study programmes* in all fields and cycles of study, specifying compliance with deadlines and the result of the most recent external evaluation for each study programme.

Once ARACIS receives the request, it assesses its eligibility and contacts the institution within 15 days from the date of receipt of the request to complete the contract signature. ARACIS and HEI sign a contract to carry out the HEIC evaluation, with a duration of 6 months. The conditions under which the external evaluation is carried out are laid down in the contract.

If it is found that there are university study programmes that have not complied with the legal requirements for external quality assessment and their operation, the ARACIS Board notifies the HEI that it would not carry out the external institutional assessment until all study programmes have been brought into legality. At the same time, ARACIS shall immediately inform the EM in writing of the situation.

5.1.2 Preparation of the Internal Evaluation Report

The applicant higher education institution develops the IER, the structure of which complies with the areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators set out in the Methodology and these Guidelines (as set out in Annex 1).
The design of the IER should meet the requirements for standards and performance indicators specified in Annex 1. If the institution considers that there is other data and information relevant for the purpose of the assessment,

they can include it in the IER and add their own benchmarks and related performance indicators.
The internal evaluation report for the periodic external evaluation must contain a section on the *Analysis of aspects of internal quality assurance activity (SWOT analysis)* in the period between two successive external evaluations, taking into account the results of the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the internal evaluation and the external evaluation.

Structure of an HEI Internal Evaluation Report

The IER consists of two parts - a descriptive-analytical part (Part A) and a justification part (Part B). Both parts are structured around standards and performance indicators.
Part A has two levels:

1) The descriptive level shows how the educational structure being assessed meets the relevant standards and performance indicators. References to supporting documents in Part B must be included in the document;
2) At the analytical level, the IER shows the strengths and weaknesses, outstanding achievements and issues to be addressed. The IER may include a section on progress made since the previous assessment and a section on actions planned to address the problems identified.

Part B includes:

1) Documents such as internal regulations, strategies, policies, procedures, guidelines, etc.;
2) Information in the form of graphs, tables or other representations;
3) Information provided by the various stakeholders interested in the development of the institution.

IER has approx. *60* pages and is presented *in paper* and *electronic format*. Annexes and additional documents shall be submitted *in electronic format only*.

5.2 Stage II. Visit to the HEI of the Expert Evaluation Commission

After receiving the request for external evaluation from the HEI ARACIS appoints a Expert Evaluation Panel.
The panel of expert evaluators visits the institution to verify the information submitted in the IER and to request clarifications.

5.2.1 Appointment of the Expert Evaluators Panel

After signing the contract with ARACIS, the HEI draws up the IER and ARACIS appoints the Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP), which is primarily responsible for carrying out the external evaluation.
The process of appointing the Expert Evaluation Panel takes place according to a procedure approved within ARACIS.
The External Quality Assessment Department, in the case of accreditations and periodic evaluations, receives the request from the HEI, determines the number

and nominates the members of the Expert Evaluation Panel for that external evaluation.

The Expert Evaluators Committee may include the following members among the evaluators registered in the ARACIS National Register of Evaluators (RNE), as appropriate:

a) a university professor with experience in the field of quality assurance, member of the Institutional Review Board for managerial and financial activities;

b) a university professor with experience in teaching, research and quality assessment, member of the RNE;

c) one student representative from any nationally recognised student organisation in Romania, following a university study programme at the level of study relevant to the HEI under assessment, member of RNES;

(d) an employer or a representative of the economic sector relevant to the HEI who is a member of the Employers' Committee;

e) one member of the ARACIS Advisory Board.

In the case of external evaluation of the HEI, at least one of the members of the Expert Evaluation Panel must be an international expert from abroad.

The expert evaluation committee is appointed within a maximum of 10 (ten) days after the signing of the contract between ARACIS and HEI.

Once the ARACIS Board has approved the Expert Evaluation Panel, the institution is informed of the composition of the Expert Evaluation Panel. The HEI may challenge the composition of this Commission within 10 (ten) days of its notification, making reasoned comments on its appointed members, but may not propose other experts. If the HEI has contested the composition of the Expert Evaluators Commission, the ARACIS Board, within 10 (days), after consultation with the External Quality Assessment Department, shall examine the contestation and may appoint other members of the Expert Evaluators Commission, whose composition remains final.

The EEP is assisted by a Mission Director, appointed by the ARACIS Board from among **its** members.

The Mission Director shall propose to the ARACIS Executive Board or the ARACIS Board a coordinator of the Expert Evaluators Panel from among its appointed members. The proposal is discussed and approved in the ARACIS Board.

5.2.2 The work of the Expert Evaluators Panel

Objectives *of the mission director* are:

a) monitor the duration of the evaluation so that it is not carried out under time pressure, in order to help the expert evaluators make their own evaluations and recommendations on the HEI;

b) ensure the transparency of the evaluation process;

c) ensure permanent interaction with a representative of the HEI, hereinafter referred to as the *contact person*. The contact person contributes to effective communication between the ARACIS evaluators and the HEI and is designated by Rector's Decision.

The EEP coordinator focuses predominantly on institutional level issues and has an important role in ensuring that the work of the committee members collects the relevant data needed for a full evaluation.

Assessors, persons with relevant experience for their functions within the assessment team, are trained by ARACIS in accordance with the dynamics of the methodology, standards, criteria and performance indicators.

The external evaluation should be as transparent and efficient as possible, while not consuming more resources than necessary. To this end, the Expert Evaluation Panel uses existing information and documentary support from the HEI.

Through the *Mission Director, the* Expert Evaluation Panel is monitored by the ARACIS Board throughout the preparation, conduct and reporting of the external evaluation mission.

Prior to the visit to the institution, the Expert Evaluation Panel analyses the HEI submitted by the HEI, verifies whether the standards and performance indicators related to the HEI and the objective of the assessment correspond to the ARACIS Methodology and Guidelines, verifies the completeness of the information and the correspondence between the descriptive-analytical part and the supporting part included in the HEI. The expert evaluators panel may request additional information and clarification from the institution prior to the evaluation visit to the HEI.

ARACIS organises a pre-evaluation visit meeting with representatives of the HEIs. This meeting usually takes place at ARACIS headquarters. With the agreement of both parties, the meeting can be organised online and recorded by ARACIS. ARACIS representatives meet with the HEI team that manages the quality assurance assessment process and is involved in the preparation of the IER. The objective is to set the agenda for the visit and identify the additional information that will be requested, in line with the related standards and performance indicators that form the basis of the external evaluation.

On the basis of preliminary discussions with the HEI, as well as existing information in ARACIS, the Mission Director proposes for approval by the ARACIS Board the timetable for the institutional evaluation visit.

5.2.3 Coordination of the Expert Evaluation Panel for the evaluation of the HEI

The *Mission Director* makes HEI recommendations on the conduct of the visit and works with the evaluation team on the initial analysis of the IER, using the information in the ARACIS database as a baseline. The *Mission Director* is an important interlocutor in the dialogue with the HEI representative assessed.
At the same time, he is responsible for the completion of the assignment, collaborating with the *Coordinator of the Expert Evaluators Panel* in drafting and, if necessary, revising the EEP Report on the basis of any suggestions made by the evaluated HEIs and the reports of the foreign expert or the students. He signs together with the *EEP Coordinator* the final form of the *Report of the Expert Evaluators Panel*.

5.2.4 Student participation in the Expert Evaluation Panel

Students are key expert assessors in institutional external evaluations, which examine a range of issues relevant to students such as:

a) the quality of information provided to candidates/students by the HEI;
b) how learning is facilitated and supported;
c) the learning outcomes expected to be achieved and those actually achieved in practice when obtaining the university qualification, etc.

During each external evaluation process, students are invited to participate in the main stages of the process. Designated representatives of student federations may be invited to attend the preliminary meeting between ARACIS and HEI. Members of the representative body, as well as other students, are invited to attend certain meetings during the evaluation visit and have the opportunity to ensure that the external evaluation team is aware of the issues of primary concern and their concerns as students.

5.2.5 Evaluation visit to the higher education institution

During the EEP visit the following objectives are usually pursued:

a) consultation of complementary documentation provided by the HEI, including the reports of external evaluators involved in internal evaluations;
b) checking how the HEI approaches quality assurance;
c) verification of the link between institutional procedures and administrative-managerial structures and their application to study programmes, with emphasis on the effectiveness of internal evaluations;
d) checking how the HEI relates to the requirements for the provision of knowledge, competences and skills specified in the National Framework for Qualifications in Higher Education;
e) verification of internal evaluation processes of study programmes;
f) checking the accuracy, reliability and completeness of the information published on the HEI website for students and the interested public, with a

focus on the specifications of the study programmes (mission, content, qualification on graduation);

g) assessing the stated quality of study programmes and actual student outcomes, not only on the basis of academic results, but also on how students are assisted in the learning process and how the use of learning environments is optimised;
h) clarifying current issues and those arising from the conduct of the evaluation with the staff of the HEI management.

In order to help the Expert Evaluators Panel to achieve its objectives, the members of the EEP have at their disposal as sources of information:

a) HEI internal quality assessment report and supporting documentation;
b) the set of information to be reported by the HEI annually to the MoE and, respectively, CNFIS - National Council for Higher Education Funding and CNCSIS - National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education;
c) information presented in the form of own activity evaluation reports by student representatives within the HEI;
d) reports on HEI produced by ARACIS or other relevant bodies over the last five years;
e) information obtained during or after previous evaluation visits.

The evaluation visit to the HEI will take place over three to four days, depending on the availability of the various stakeholders to attend the scheduled meetings, and should include the following activities:

a) Preliminary meeting with HEI management to present the visit work plan.
b) Meeting with HEI academic staff.
c) Meeting with a representative group of students, including representatives of student organisations as appropriate; the group should include students from each year of study, enrolled in different cycles and study programmes.
d) Meeting with a group of employers' representatives from the sectors where HEI graduates usually work. The number of participants in this group will vary depending on the sector of activity and geographical location of the HEI, but it is recommended to include a minimum of five (5) participants.
e) Meeting with a representative number of HEI graduates.
f) Visit to relevant organisational/administrative structures and quality assurance departments: departments, faculties, laboratories, etc.
g) Meeting with people in charge of educational management and with staff who administer students' tuition.
h) Meeting with university management to review relevant documents related to the educational process.
i) Final meeting with representatives of the institution to present a summary of the main observations and recommendations made by the Expert Evaluation Panel.

The detailed schedule for each working meeting with management, teaching staff and students is determined by the EEP in agreement with the evaluated HEI.

The EEP works independently, without the participation of the contact person from the HEI, which is requested as appropriate. Under the leadership of the EEP Coordinator, the team analyses the findings/results of the external evaluation at institutional level:

a) makes judgements on the degree of confidence that can be placed in the HEI for the quality management of its study programmes;
b) makes judgments about the confidence with which the information that HEI publishes about the quality of its programmes and graduation standards can be taken into account in terms of accuracy, integrity, completeness and fairness;
c) identify good practices in quality management or in the teaching-learning-assessment process and facilitating learning;
d) develop preliminary recommendations for further improving the quality of the work of the HEI and the information disseminated.

The **Mission Director** designated by the ARACIS Board participates together with the EEP members in the activity of the last day of the external evaluation visit. The team also confirms on the last day of the visit any programmes or areas for which it wishes to have the expert opinion of other independent experts. As far as possible, they are notified to the assessed HEI on the second day of the visit. Where additional expert advice is sought, the findings, evaluations and recommendations of the EEP made on the last day of the visit are provisional.
The visit to the institution is completed within three months from the date of receipt of the IER at ARACIS. The review of the IER can take up to 30 days, which includes a maximum of 15 days for the Expert Evaluation Panel to review the IER and a further 15 days for the institution to provide any additional information or clarification requested. The visit to the institution will take place within two months of the institution sending the additional information requested.

5.2.6 Report of the Expert Evaluators Panel

The conclusions of the Expert Evaluation Panel are recorded in the Expert Evaluation Panel Report, which presents the results, observations and recommendations made during the IER analysis and the visit to the HEI based on the criteria, standards, performance indicators, according to the ARACIS Guidelines with the Mission Director's and Coordinator's Report, the Foreign Expert's Report and the Students' Report as supporting documents.
In order to ensure the transparency of the external evaluation process, the student evaluators and the international evaluator each prepare a report, from which the EEP Coordinator takes the most important elements to be included in the EEP Report.

The evaluator from the ARACIS Advisory Board participates throughout the visit with the role of continuously monitoring compliance by all parties involved in the external evaluation with the evaluation procedures and ethical rules and reporting separately on these issues.

The EEP report includes the results obtained for each set of requirements, together with the expert assessors' observations and comments on quality, as well as recommendations on the rating and opinion given to the HEI following the external evaluation.

The EEP report contains evaluations of the confidence that can be placed in the quality of the management of the HEI based on the clarity, completeness and accuracy of the information it publishes on the quality of the degree programmes. The EEP Report also comments on other issues, including the characteristics, capabilities and limitations of the internal quality assurance system within the HEI.

At the same time, the EEP Report contains references to the concordance with the *National Framework of Qualifications in Higher Education* and the conformity of academic achievements with the main provisions of the External Evaluation Methodology, standards, benchmarks and the list of performance indicators presented in Annex 1 of ARACIS.

The EEP report highlights aspects of good practice and concludes with a proposal to grant/not grant accreditation or, where appropriate, to maintain/withdraw accreditation.

After the end of the visit to the HEI, the Expert Evaluation Panel has 30 days to finalise the EEP Report and submit it to the ARACIS External Quality Assessment Department.

5.3 Stage III. Validation by ARACIS of the Report of the Expert Evaluators Panel on the outcome of the evaluation and adoption of the decision

The ARACIS External Quality Assessment Department receives the EEP Report, analyses it, validates it, proposes a grade and an opinion, and recommends a follow-up plan, which it submits to the ARACIS Board for approval.
The decision of the ARACIS Board must be published on the ARACIS website and officially communicated to the HEI and the MoE within 30 days of the end of the visit to the institution.

5.3.1 Analysis and validation of the Report of the Expert Evaluation Panel by the ARACIS External Quality Assessment Department

Validation of the Report prepared by the expert evaluators following the visit to the HEI involves checking it against the criteria, standards and performance indicators.
The main purpose of this process is to decide, within the ARACIS External Quality Assessment Department, on the content of the EEP Report and the monitoring plan to be submitted to HEI and MoE.
The EEP report validated by the External Quality Assessment Department and the monitoring plan are sent to the HEI for feedback. Based on the documented

feedback received from the HEI, the External Quality Assessment Department prepares the revised form of the EEP Report and the revised monitoring plan, which are submitted to the ARACIS Board for approval.

5.3.2 ARACIS Board Decision on the Report of the Expert Evaluation Commission and the Monitoring Plan of the Evaluated Higher Education Institution

After approval of the EEP Report, ARACIS publishes it on the website and sends the final form to HEIs and MoE. As a result, the MoE will issue the final accreditation/non-accreditation or maintenance/withdrawal of accreditation decision based on the ARACIS opinion. The monitoring plan approved by the ARACIS Board will only be sent to the HEI.

After the publication of the EEP Report, the HEI is notified that it is accessible online, either by letter or by email providing a link to access it. This notification must be sent no later than the third day after publication.

The ***ARACIS Board-approved EEP report*** released by ARACIS aims to provide information for both the general public and education specialists (university and management staff, researchers, policy makers, etc.). The report therefore includes a summary aimed particularly at the general public, mainly students. It is made available separately from the rest of the report. On the other hand, the HEI is requested to provide a short statement of acceptance of the report's findings for publication by ARACIS as an annex to the report. The statement gives the HEI the opportunity to present the progress made since the visit of the evaluation team, in particular the actions taken or proposed and which are related to the recommendations contained in the report.

With reference to the HEI evaluations, the opinions and grades awarded by ARACIS are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Opinions and qualifications granted by ARACIS

Structure assessed	Objective of the evaluation	Score granted	ARACIS opinion to MoE	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
Higher education provider - organisation	PA for the proposed study programmes	No score is granted	Asper para. 3.1.1 (of the Methodology)	*Qualification is awarded only for its bachelor's degree programmes subject to provisional operating authorisation, with a view to HEI obtaining provisional operating authorisation.*
Higher Education	A	High confidence	Accreditation	*HEI assessed receives five-year operating licence. The next periodic evaluation may be*

Structure assessed	Objective of the evaluation	Score granted	ARACIS opinion to MoE	Remarks
Institution (HEI)				*requested after a maximum of five years.*
		Confidence	Accreditation	*HEI assessed receives five-year operating licence. The next periodic evaluation may be requested after a maximum of five years.*
		Lack of confidence	No accreditation	*The HEI may request a new evaluation within a maximum of two years after the report has been issued finding that the quality standards have not been met. Education providers found to have failed to meet quality standards in two consecutive institutional evaluations will go into liquidation.*
	PE	High confidence	Maintaining accreditation. Eligibility for periodic institutional audit assessment	*The evaluated HEI maintains its accreditation for a period of five years.*
		Confidence	Maintaining accreditation	*The evaluated HEI maintains its accreditation for a period of five years.*
		Lack of confidence	Withdrawal of accreditation	*The HEI may request a new evaluation within two years of the report finding non-compliance with the quality standards. Education providers found to have failed to meet quality standards in two consecutive institutional evaluations will go into liquidation.*

The institution may lodge an appeal against the result of the external evaluation carried out by ARACIS, according to *the Procedure for the settlement of complaints and appeals submitted by higher education institutions*, published on the ARACIS website.

5.4 Stage IV. Monitoring of externally evaluated higher education institutions

The monitoring plan is drawn up by ARACIS on the basis of the recommendations in the EEP Report and discussions with the HEIs, with the aim of establishing the basis for an ongoing dialogue with the HEIs and the persons responsible for IQAS.
When ARACIS informs the HEI that the EEP Report has been published on the website, it also informs the HEI of its availability to meet at the Agency's premises with the persons responsible for the CA in the institution to present the results of the external evaluation and the monitoring plan.
A monitoring visit usually takes place midway between two successive external evaluations, the meeting allowing the HEI and ARACIS to discuss progress and obstacles encountered during the implementation of the Monitoring Plan.
The manner of carrying out the monitoring process is set out in a specific procedure.
The costs related to these activities are determined by ARACIS by assimilation with the regulations in force concerning the Agency's external evaluation fees.
ARACIS, as well as other public authorities empowered by law, carry out controls and/or follow-up activities on the status of implementation of the recommendations by the HEI, halfway between two successive external evaluations, carried out in accordance with the law, or whenever deemed necessary.

Supporting Annexes to the EEP Report

Supporting Annex 1 - List of teaching staff according to departmental function statements
Supporting Annex 2 - Centralised situation of educational premises
Supporting Annex 3 - Number of students enrolled by educational level and year of study
Supporting Annex 4 - Centraliser of scientific research data
Supporting Annex 5 - Status of employment of permanent teaching staff in the educational institution

6 Annexes

6.1 Annex 1. Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators for the external evaluation of higher education institutions

Higher Education Institution (HEI) is the organisation providing higher education education authorised to operate provisionally or accredited that requests ARACIS to initiate the external evaluation procedure.

The organisation interested in providing education services, referred to in the Methodology as "the organisation", is a legal entity that includes educational activities in its statutes and undergoes the authorisation process to become an education provider.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
Area A. Institutional capacity
Criterion A.1. Institutional, administrative and managerial structures
S.A.1.1. HEI mission, objectives, vision and strategy
IP.A.1.1.1. *Mission statement, objectives and strategic vision.* The mission and objectives of the HEI are public, respond to society's needs and ensure sustainable institutional development. The HEI has documents on its establishment, structure and functioning.
IP.A.1.1.2. *University Charter*. HEI has an approved University Charter, the provisions of which are public, consistent with national legislation and the principles of the European Higher Education Area, known to the members of the university community.
IP.A.1.1.3. *Strategic objectives of the HEI*. The objectives of the HEI are clear and individualise it in the National Higher Education System.
IP.A.1.1.4. *Strategic vision*. The HEI proves that it has regulations in place to implement the strategic plan and operational plans. The strategic plan and operational plans are public, known and applied by members of the university community. HEI strategy and policies are in line with the stated mission.
IP.A.1.1.5. *Consistency of the national objectives of the HEI with its internationalisation objectives*. The activities mentioned in the strategic plan are in line with the national and international objectives of the HEI.
IP.A.1.1.6. *Implementation of the strategic plan and achievement of objectives*. The HEI has mechanisms in place to ensure that objectives are achieved through the implementation of the strategic plan.
S.A.1.2. Stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of the HIA/organisation strategy

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.1.2.1. Internal stakeholders (teaching staff, research staff, students, administrative staff) are consulted and involved in the development of the institutional strategy. HEI takes into account the views of students in areas where they have a direct interest.
IP.A.1.2.2. External stakeholders (employers, experts, authorities, etc.) are consulted and involved in the development of the institutional strategy with reference to academic training, research involvement, graduate employability, etc.
IP.A.1.2.3. The mission and objectives of the degree programmes are in line with the mission of the higher education institution and the educational requirements identified in the labour market.
IP.A.1.2.4. HEI/organisation encourages creativity, innovation and institutional accountability for both staff and students.
S.A.1.3. Community involvement, contribution of the HEI/organisation to social, economic and cultural development at local, regional and national level, in line with its mission
IP.A.1.3.1. The HEI/organisation has a good reputation in the social, economic and cultural environment and is actively involved in the development of local, regional and national projects in cooperation with other universities, professional associations or other stakeholders.
IP.A.1.3.1. Ref. 1: HEI has structures responsible for the policies and objectives of community involvement and social outreach actions. HEI organises social activities and promotes social dialogue. Staff participate in collaborative initiatives with external stakeholders/partners.
IP.A.1.3.1. Ref. 2: HEI carries out consultancy, artistic creation and community development projects, including community outreach. HEI allocates logistical, human, material and financial resources to the implementation of these projects.
IP.A.1.3.1. Ref. 3: Community service, development or social work projects are disseminated to the academic community. Students are involved in projects with local, regional and national impact.
IP.A.1.3.1. Ref. 4: HEI contributes to the social, economic and cultural development of the development region and nationally. HEI collaborates with all relevant national structures and institutions and makes a proactive contribution to improving policy and quality in the national IS system.
S.A.1.4. Implementation of the collaboration and partnership strategy at regional, national, European and international level
IP.A.1.4.1. The HEI develops and implements action plans for internationalisation strategies, setting cooperation policy priorities with stakeholders.
IP.A.1.4.2. The strategy and objectives that HEI has set for its teaching, learning, research, internationalisation and societal activities correspond to its mission and to the regional, national and international context.
IP.A.1.4.3. HEI initiatives for the internationalisation of higher education have led to agreements with other universities for training, research or joint projects at national and/or international level.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.1.4.3. Ref. 1: HEI is part of international consortia of European universities.
S.A.1.5. Management and administration
IP.A.1.5.1. HEI has internal rules of operation, approved in accordance with the regulations in force. There is a clear and transparent division of responsibilities, tasks and authority for each of the management structures.
IP.A.1.5.2. The management system uses information and communication systems, such as Internet and Intranet, involving members of the university community, i.e. teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff, administrative staff, students and other beneficiaries and partners of the HEI.
IP.A.1.5.2. Ref.1: Representatives of the economic and social environment, education trade unions, other beneficiaries and partners of the HEI are involved in the management structures.
IP.A.1.5.3. Students are also part of the governing structures of the HEI and their number respects the legal provisions.
IP.A.1.5.4. The mechanism for electing student representatives to senate, councils and other structures is clearly described in the University Charter and internal regulations, is democratic and transparent, non-discriminatory and does not limit the right of students to represent and be represented. The process of establishing and electing management structures and functions at university, faculty and department level shall respect the principle of representativeness by faculty, department, section/teaching line, degree programme, as appropriate.
IP.A.1.5.5. Teaching staff, teaching assistants, administrative staff and students have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes regarding planning of activities, allocation of resources, evaluation of results, curriculum design, etc.
IP.A.1.5.6. Legally constituted student organisations express opinions and make proposals on all matters of general interest to the HEI (development prospects, educational plans, research programmes, social and cultural issues, internal regulations, etc.).
IP.A.1.5.7. HEI supports student initiatives and funds their activities within the legal framework.
IP.A.1.5.8. HEI has a strategic plan, with a horizon of at least four years, which can be updated according to the evolution and context of higher education.
IP.A.1.5.9. Annual operational plans are subsequent to the strategic plan and are rigorously implemented.
IP.A.1.5.9. Ref. 1: HEI demonstrates that it involves its economic and social partners in updating and implementing the strategic plan, including by tracking the career development of its own graduates.
IP.A.1.5.10. The HEI has administrative structures that comply with the legal regulations on the number and qualifications of its staff.
IP.A.1.5.11. The HEI has governing structures and bodies at all levels, each with its own authority and powers.
IP.A.1.5.12. Administrative structures have mechanisms to continuously improve their performance.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.1.5.12. Ref. 1: The level of computerisation of administrative structures is regularly upgraded to keep up with international best practice.
IP.A.1.5.13. Within the HEI, there are regulations on the system for dealing with student complaints, appeals and requests.
S.A.1.6. Academic ethics and integrity, code of ethics, academic freedom and academic autonomy
IP.A.1.6.1. The HEI/organisation has a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, upholding the values of academic freedom, academic autonomy and ethical integrity, approved by the University Senate.
IP.A.1.6.2. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct provides for active measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of plagiarism and to promote the principles of ethics and integrity among all members of the academic community.
IP.A.1.6.3. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct provides mechanisms and measures to ensure equal opportunities and protection against intolerance and discrimination of any kind.
IP.A.1.6.4. The curricula of the degree programmes provide for separate ethics and integrity courses.
IP.A.1.6.5. Professionalism and ethical behaviour of human resources are expected, expected, monitored and evaluated systematically at the level of each study programme, ensuring the successful implementation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
IP.A.1.6.6. The HEI/organisation ensures compliance with ethical rules in research.
IP.A.1.6.7. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct provides mechanisms for the operational handling of complaints of breaches of ethics and professional integrity, which are also mentioned in the Rector's annual report.
IP.A.1.6.8. The HEI/organisation demonstrates that the consistent application of active prevention measures and the promotion of ethics and integrity principles in all the processes it manages - management, education, research - has led to improved performance.
IP.A.1.6.9. The HEI/organisation has a policy based on prevention of possible breaches of the Code of Ethics and Academic Integrity, demonstrating this through public statements, studies, analyses or measures.
S.A.1.7. Public accountability and responsibility
IP.A.1.7.1. The HEI/organisation assumes the responsibility to take all measures to ensure the quality of its educational offer according to the legitimate expectations of society and its continuous improvement in line with its stated mission.
IP.A.1.7.2. HEI has internal audit practices in place in relation to the main areas of academic activity. An annual academic audit report is published, debated in the Senate, and a plan of action is drawn up to improve activity.
IP.A.1.7.3. Internal audit is carried out effectively, regularly and on an internally regulated basis at the level of the HEI and the departments.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.1.7.4 Stakeholders are consulted and involved in the design and implementation of policies and actions on public accountability and responsibility.
IP.A.1.7.5. The internal audit concerns administrative, financial/accounting, academic integrity, teaching, student assessment, research and student services issues. An annual academic audit report is published, debated in the Senate and an improvement plan is drawn up.
IP.A.1.7.6. HEI demonstrates the implementation of the measures set out in the improvement plan, reports annually and makes public the status of the implementation of the improvement measures and the results achieved.
Criterion A.2. Material basis
S.A.2.1. Assets, endowment, financial resources allocated, support for students
IP.A.2.1.1. The HEI/organisation has appropriate teaching, research and other facilities, either its own (at least 70% for accreditation) or rented, which it makes available to all students and teaching staff.
IP.A.2.1.2. HEI provides teaching and research facilities that comply with the technical, safety and hygiene and sanitary standards in force. The indicator also refers to accommodation and other facilities provided to students for social, cultural or sporting activities.
IP.A.2.1.3. The HEI has infrastructure development plans, dependent on projected revenues.
IP.A.2.1.4. Spaces for teaching, research, accommodation, dining and other student support and extra-curricular activities, including medical offices, are accessible to disabled people.
IP.A.2.1.5. The classrooms are equipped with technical equipment and software products suitable for teaching, learning and communication, which facilitate the work of the teacher and the receptiveness of each student. The number of seats in lecture, seminar, laboratory and project rooms is correlated to the size of the study groups - series, groups, sub-groups, etc., according to the regulations in force.
IP.A.2.1.6. The own or rented research premises/laboratories have the equipment and technical means appropriate to the requirements of the topics addressed.
IP.A.2.1.6. Ref. 1: The equipment of the teaching and research laboratories is comparable to that of prestigious international HEIs.
IP.A.2.1.7. The IT infrastructure is efficiently managed, maintained in good working order and updated in line with the latest developments in IT and media technologies.
IP.A.2.1.8. Communication systems and access to public information are available to all members of the university community.
IP.A.2.1.9. The study programmes benefit from e-learning platforms where course materials and other teaching materials are posted.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.2.1.10. The HEI shall demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources to support its specific activities on the basis of an annual budget.
IP.A.2.1.10. Ref.1: The HEI demonstrates that it has forward-looking financial resources, a three/four year budget projection and short and medium term financial policies to ensure financial sustainability.
IP.A.2.1.10. Ref. 2: The HEI has substantial financial reserves, diversified sources of funding and demonstrates rigour in planning and defining investment and financial management policies.
IP.A.2.1.11. Planning and budgeting for learning resources and student support services takes into account the requirements of a diverse student population (mature students, those in PTL or DL forms of education, employed students or international students, students with disabilities), the paradigm shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of teaching and learning. Students are informed about the existence of these resources.
IP.A.2.1.12. HEI has a regulation for the awarding of scholarships and other forms of material support to students, which it applies consistently, in compliance with the legal provisions in force. Scholarships are awarded from State budget allocations and own resources.
IP.A.2.1.12. Ref. 1: The proportion of the HEI's own resources in the scholarship fund shall be at least 10%.
IP.A.2.1.12. Ref. 2: The proportion of the HEI's own resources in the scholarship fund shall be at least 20%.
IP.A.2.1.13. The HEI/organisation provides material support to students for participation in research programmes, scientific events, student competitions, publication editing, cultural events, etc.
IP.A.2.1.14. The administrative staff's working hours with students are posted on the HEI/organisation's website and adapted to the needs of the various categories of students.
IP.A.2.1.15. HEI analyses data on the adequacy of resources and material services, including student support services, and uses them to develop these services.
Criterion A.3. Human resources and the institution's capacity to attract human resources from outside the institution and from outside the country, in accordance with the law
S.A.3.1. The HEI/organisation has mechanisms in place to ensure that the recruitment, management and professional development of teachers is carried out in accordance with the requirements of their duties.
IP.A.3.1.1. The staff employed is adequate to ensure that all teaching, research and administrative activities of the HEI/organisation are carried out.
IP.A.3.1.2. The HEI/organisation applies a transparent mechanism for the recruitment of staff in accordance with the legal provisions. The duties and responsibilities of the staff correspond to the qualifications and requirements of the posts.
IP.A.3.1.3. Administrative staff are skilled in student support activities and have opportunities to develop their skills.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.A.3.1.4. The HEI has a staff training plan, established according to the priorities defined in the institutional development project.
IP.A.3.1.4. Ref.1: Within the framework of partnership agreements, the HEI ensures the participation in the educational and research processes of teachers and researchers from prestigious HEI in the country and abroad.
IP.A.3.1.4. Ref. 2: *The professional development of teachers and other staff is also achieved by supporting their participation in training courses, conferences, seminars, workshops organised at national or international level in the framework of projects or bilateral cooperation relations.*
IP.A.3.1.5. The HEI/organisation invites academics from home and abroad for debates, research and exchange of academic experience.
Area B. Educational effectiveness
Criterion B.1. Content of study programmes
S.B.1.1. Admission of students. Principles and conditions for admission and the assessment methods are clear and publicly available
IP.B.1.1.1. The principles of the admission policy for all academic studies programmes offered by the HEI/organisation are established and communicated to candidates in advance (at least six months before application), in accordance with the regulations in force.
IP.B.1.1.2. Admission to a cycle of university studies is only on the basis of the graduation diploma from the previous cycle of studies, according to the law.
IP.B.1.1.3. HEI informs candidates with disabilities about the facilities available to them during admission and throughout their schooling.
IP.B.1.1.4. Admission is based solely on the applicant's academic skills and no discriminatory criteria are applied.
IP.B.1.1.5. Admission/transfer of students is made within the limits of the tuition capacity approved by ARACIS and published in the GD.
IP.B.1.1.6. The admission procedure is approved by the University Senate and does not change for the academic year for which admission is organised.
IP.B.1.1.7. Enrolled students have concluded a Study Contract with the institution, which complies with the legislation in force, in which the rights and obligations of the parties are stipulated.
IP.B.1.1.8. In order to promote the educational offer, the HEI provides real and accurate information in line with the approved enrolment capacities and the potential of the existing human and material resources.
IP.B.1.1.9. HEI demonstrates that it ensures the inclusion of all admitted students by using procedures to integrate and adapt students to the requirements and specificities of the academic environment.
S.B.1.2. Structure and coherence of study programmes/specialisations

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.B.1.2.1. The structure of the educational offer is approved by the University Senate and presented to the public. The specifics, content and activities of the study programmes are communicated to students before the start of the academic year.
IP.B.1.2.2. Each study programme/specialisation is based on the correspondence between the expected outcomes of the teaching process and the university qualification and is closely related to one or more existing occupations in the Romanian Classification of Occupations (COR) or ISCO-08 and their related occupational standards.
IP.B.1.2.3. The structure of the study programme can only change from the first year of the following academic year. The structure of the study programme remains unchanged for a class of students.
IP.B.1.2.4. The implementation of study programmes is done at university level through cooperation between faculties.
IP.B.1.2.5. HEI has procedures that allow for student mobility within the university, based on the transferable credit system.
IP.B.1.2.6. The share of teaching activity hours corresponding to optional subjects in the total hours accumulated at the end of the study programme by a student complies with the specific ARACIS standards.
IP.B.1.2.6.Ref.1 The structure of study programmes takes into account the diversity of students and their educational requirements, is flexible and allows each student to choose their own learning pathway, according to their skills and interests, without affecting the objectives of the study programme and the expected learning outcomes at the end of their studies.
IP.B.1.2.7. Study programmes are designed to facilitate national and international student mobility and recognition of ECTS credits.
IP.B.1.2.8. Degree programmes are designed so that graduates benefit from learning outcomes to the highest degree, including the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge.
IP.B.1.2.9. The study programme includes well-structured internship or placement opportunities as appropriate. The placement may include internships, practice activities or other parts of the study programme that do not take place in the HEI, but which allow the student to gain experience in the field of study. Internships are in line with the objectives of the study programme. The HEI is obliged to provide a minimum of 30% of the required traineeships, of which at least 50% must be outside the institution.
IP.B.1.2.10. The HEI/organisation ensures the coherence of the study programmes, reviews the content of the subjects to avoid overlap of subjects covered as well as to update them and reflects the student-centredness of the teaching-learning process.
IP.B.1.2.11. The HEI/organisation regularly monitors and evaluates the objectives, content and learning outcomes related to the study programme and their impact on the learning process. The curriculum is regularly reviewed on the basis of peer reviews, with students, alumni and employer representatives, thus benefiting from external expertise.
IP.B.1.2.12. The HEI/organisation ensures the quality of the teaching-learning-assessment process, regardless of where it takes place (the institution's headquarters or the premises of legally established university extensions).

Areas, criteria, standards and performance/reference indicators
IP.B.1.2.13. The development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the educational offer follows national regulations and the HEI/organisation strategy.
IP.B.1.2.13. Ref. 1: The implementation of study programmes, depending on the form of education, is monitored and supported by specialised internal structures such as a "pedagogical analysis and development centre" where innovative and effective pedagogical technologies are developed.
IP.B.1.2.13. Ref. 2: HEI monitors the actual time taken by students to complete their degree programmes.
S.B.1.3. Ability to run study programmes efficiently in terms of human resources and learning environment
IP.B.1.3.1. The qualifications and competences of the teaching staff correspond to the academic requirements of the degree programmes.
IP.B.1.3.2. The professionalism and ethical behaviour of human resources are systematically monitored and evaluated.
IP.B.1.3.3. Teaching staff set teaching, learning and assessment objectives for each subject/programme of study and these are communicated to students and stakeholders.
IP.B.1.3.4. The ratio between the number of teaching staff and the number of students, corresponding to the enrolment capacity of the study programme evaluated, complies with the provisions of the standards specific to the field of study, promoted by ARACIS.
IP.B.1.3.5. HEI ensures the quality of exchange programmes and international mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff and promotes mobility at all levels.
IP.B.1.3.5. Ref. 1: Study programmes provide communication skills in two languages, at least one of which is an international language.
IP.B.1.3.6. HEI meets the quality criteria specific to integrated degree programmes if it offers such degree programmes.
IP.B.1.3.6. Ref.1: HEI enters into partnerships with institutions abroad and establishes agreements on the terms and conditions applicable to the integrated degree programme.
S.B.1.4. Relevance of university degree programmes
IP.B.1.4.1. HEI has implemented procedures for annual peer review of how knowledge is transmitted and assimilated by students.
IP.B.1.4.2. The study programme is designed with the involvement of representatives of the academic environment, including students, of the socio-economic and cultural-artistic environment and of the labour market.
IP.B.1.4.3. Study programmes are designed and regularly reviewed on the basis of peer reviews with students, alumni and employer representatives, and benefit from external expertise.
IP.B.1.4.3. Ref. 1: HEI uses mechanisms to ensure that learning outcomes, graduate employability and the satisfaction of various stakeholders can be measured, analysed and leveraged to improve the quality of study programmes.

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IP.B.1.4.3. Ref. 2: Expected learning outcomes at curriculum level are in line with regional, national or international socio-economic perspectives.
S.B.1.5. Extending the reach of university degree programmes
IP.B.1.5.1. University study programmes are also organised to meet the needs of different categories of students, such as students enrolled in part-time study programmes, students with disabilities, students who are already employed, mature students who wish to study for professional purposes, personal development, etc.
IP.B.1.5.1. Ref. 1: Foreign students study at the HEI, enrolled also following inter-institutional agreements.
Criterion B.2. Learning outcomes
S.B.2.1. Learner-centred teaching, learning and assessment methods
IP.B.2.1.1. Student-centredness of teaching, learning and assessment methods is the responsibility of the HEI/organisation and each teacher, through the appropriate design of teaching methods and learning environments. The student - teacher relationship is based on partnership, with each taking responsibility for achieving the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students in terms of their relevance to their professional and personal development.
IP.B.2.1.2. Teachers receive pedagogical training in teaching at university level. In addition to training/teaching skills, they also have the skills to advise, monitor and facilitate learning processes.
IP.B.2.1.3. There is ongoing work in HEI to identify, develop, test, implement and evaluate new techniques for effective learning, including new applications of information and communication technology.
IP.B.2.1.4. The teaching/learning strategy also takes into account the needs of students with disabilities, the particularities of students with special needs, considers and uses different methods of organising the learning and teaching process where appropriate. Students with permanent or temporary disabilities benefit from alternative methods of examination and assessment.
IP.B.2.1.4. Ref. 1: HEI creates learning environments and experiences that lead students to discover and create knowledge themselves. The teacher guides the student's intellectual development by giving it a strategic dimension.
IP.B.2.1.5. The assessment of students is objective and is done on the basis of criteria and methods clearly established at the beginning of the semester, as well as on the basis of scales made known to the students by means of subject sheets. The procedures for challenging the assessment of competences and skills are public and provide students with guarantees of an objective reassessment.
IP.B.2.1.6. HEI has procedures for the recognition and completion of periods of study for student mobility cases.
IP.B.2.1.6. Ref. 1: HEI has a regulation on the recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study undertaken at another HEI and prior learning, and recognition procedures are in line with good practice and/or international regulations to which Romania is a party, such as the Lisbon Convention, EU directives on training for regulated professions, etc.

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IP.B.2.1.7. HEI provides opportunities for students' educational and professional needs to complete, discontinue or terminate and continue their studies in the degree programs to which they have been admitted.
IP.B.2.1.8. The HEI policy on assessment of learning outcomes is fair, equitable, understood by students and in line with the HEI pedagogical approach.
IP.B.2.1.9. Learning outcomes are subject to a continuous process of updating to labour market requirements and monitoring their relevance.
IP.B.2.1.10. HEI supports the development of innovative and pedagogically excellent projects with the aim of improving the integration of graduates in the field for which they have been trained and contributing to the development of study materials in modern formats appropriate to the achievement of learning outcomes.
IP.B.2.1.11. HEI regularly monitors and evaluates the implementation of innovative projects to ensure that they achieve their objectives and meet the needs of students.
IP.B.2.1.12. The HEI regularly monitors and evaluates, through meetings with students, the implementation of the study programmes to ensure that they meet the proposed objectives and respond to students' training needs.
IP.B.2.1.13. HEI systematically collects data from the socio-economic environment on the quality and relevance of degree programmes, including studies on the labour market integration of graduates.
IP.B.2.1.14. The study groups (teaching series, groups and sub-groups) are sized in such a way as to ensure the efficient running of the educational process and the assimilation of practical skills.
IP.B.2.1.14. Ref.1. At least 50% of all graduates in each graduating class have passed the final exam.
S.B.2.2. Making use of university qualifications obtained through further studies
IP.B.2.2.1[**)]. Continuation of studies: at least 20% of the graduates of the last two years of bachelor's studies are admitted to master's studies, regardless of the field. [**)] For regulated professions in the fields of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, specialised indicators apply, taking into account training through residency.
*IP.B.2.2.1. Ref. 1***): At least 50% of the graduates of the last two graduating classes are admitted to a Master's degree in any field.* ****) For regulated professions in the fields of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, specialised indicators shall be applied, taking into account training through residency.*
S.B.2.3. Valorisation through employability

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IP.B.2.3.1. HEI continuously monitors the career of its graduates through its own system and provides a detailed annual report for all degree programmes. At least 50% of the total number of graduates in each series passed the final exam.
IP.B.2.3.2. At least 50% of graduates are employed within two years of graduation at the level of university qualification obtained.
IP.B.2.3.2. Ref. 1: More than 70% of graduates are employed within two years of graduation at the level of university qualification obtained.
IP.B.2.3.3. HEI has and implements regulations on regular survey of alumni opinion on their satisfaction with the educational process, student services and infrastructure offered by the university.
IP.B.2.3.4. More than 50% of graduates rate the learning environment offered by the university positively in relation to labour market requirements.
IP.B.2.3.4. Ref. 1: More than 75% of graduates rate the learning environment offered by the university positively.
IP.B.2.3.4. Ref. 2: More than 50% of graduates rate positively the ease of choosing their own learning pathway.
S.B.2.4. Career guidance for students
IP.B.2.4.1. Teachers have office hours available to students and customise tutoring at the student's request, according to an announced schedule. There are tutors or year tutors, who are in constant contact with students.
IP.B.2.4.2. There is a guidance centre type structure for guiding students in their choice of courses and careers at HEI and/or individual faculty level. The centre is adequately resourced to carry out its activities and publishes an annual activity report.
IP.B.2.4.2. Ref. 1: The Career Guidance and Counselling Centre is staffed with a sufficient number of competent personnel, established in accordance with the number of HEI students.
IP.B.2.4.2. Ref. 2: The Career Counselling and Guidance Centre liaises with employers and graduates of the university to streamline the transition from schooling to actual employment.
Criterion B.3. Scientific research activity
S.B.3.1. Research programmes
IP.B.3.1.1. The HEI/organisation promotes a culture of research and ensures that there is a common understanding of the nature, role and objectives of this activity. Research activities are based on a research plan.
IP.B.3.1.2. The long-term strategy and the medium- and short-term research programmes are adopted by the Senate and Faculty Councils respectively.
IP.B.3.1.3. The HEI has sufficient financial, logistical and human resources to achieve the proposed research objectives.
IP.B.3.1.4. HEI supports student participation in research projects, including allocating financial resources to this end. Students are encouraged to participate in research programmes and have access to the university's research infrastructure.

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IP.B.3.1.5. HEI ensures that research projects have achieved their objectives.
IP.B.3.1.5. Ref. 1: Research programming takes into account the objectives set and is carried out within the national framework in terms of competitiveness and exploitation.
IP.B.3.1.5. Ref. 2: *The research programming is related to the objectives and relevant to the European and global framework.*
IP.B.3.1.6. The HEI has human, material and financial potential and exploits the opportunities offered by the regional, national and international scientific research environment.
IP.B.3.1.7. The HEI organises research structures on the basis of criteria that take into account priorities, scientific skills of staff, infrastructure, etc.
IP.B.3.1.7. Ref. 1: HEI supports academic staff to participate in international research programmes. HEI has entered into partnerships in which it has carried out research in areas of national or European interest.
IP.B.3.1.7. Ref. 2: *There is a strong research-focused academic culture, evidenced by the number of research grants, publications and knowledge and technology transfer through consultancy, science parks, etc.*
IP.B.3.1.8. The HEI/organisation has a code of ethics and academic integrity according to which research is carried out in accordance with the rules of professional ethics to ensure constant vigilance against possible fraud or misconduct in research activities, including active measures to prevent and eliminate any form of plagiarism.
IP.B.3.1.9. There are documents showing certification of the fulfilment of quality or excellence standards in scientific research, in terms of organisation, follow-up of research projects, internal approval of results and elimination of unethical practices.
S.B.3.2. Transfer of scientific research results into the education process
IP.B.3.2.1. The HEI/organisation promotes scientific research in the teaching-learning process of the study programmes and demonstrates that the results of research activities are integrated into the educational process.
IP.B.3.2.2. The HEI/organisation supports the creation of research groups that include students.
IP.B.3.2.3. The value of research is reflected in the content of the study programmes, which is constantly renewed by introducing new knowledge resulting from scientific research, including our own.
S.B.3.3. Developing and exploiting research at national and international level
IP.B.3.3.1. The HEI has a procedure for monitoring and evaluating research activities.
IP.B.3.3.2. Research is exploited through: publications for teaching purposes, scientific publications, technology transfer through consultancy centres, science parks or other exploitation structures, the production of new products, etc. In higher education in *Arts*, creative activity is evaluated by specific means. In fields such as *Medical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Technical Sciences, Architecture, Urban Planning*, etc., where research results are also exploited through projects on the basis of which new products are

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developed, infrastructure development or environmental protection works are carried out, etc. These results will also be taken into account.
IP.B.3.3.3. HEI regularly organises scientific sessions , symposia, conferences, round tables, and the works are published in scientific volumes with ISBN/ISSNor in volumes dedicated to the organised activity.
IP.B.3.3.4. Research results are appreciated nationally (awards, citations, etc.) and publications, patents, major papers, etc. are listed in international databases.
IP.B.3.3.4. Ref. 1: The priorities of the scientific research activity correspond to the objectives of increasing the position of the HEI in international rankings, responding to labour market requirements and European priorities, etc.
IP.B.3.3.5. The HEI supports and rewards research groups in various ways, in accordance with the law, including material support for participation in national and international scientific events, etc.
IP.B.3.3.5. Ref. 1: Students are supported to present the results of scientific research they have participated in at national and international conferences.
Criterion B.4. Financial activity of the institution
S.B.4.1. The own budget and accounting system are adequate to ensure financial resources for education and research activities.
IP.B.4.1.1. The HEI/organisation has an annual income and expenditure budget, approved and implemented in accordance with the law.
IP.B.4.1.1. Ref. 1: HEI allocates a substantial percentage of its funds to the development of academic infrastructure. The educational process, research and student services are adequately funded and there is a continuous development of resources allocated to this area.
IP.B.4.1.2. The financial resources approved and allocated to each degree programme take account of contingencies at a level that ensures that any variation between planned and actual financial performance will not compromise academic standards and student interests. They will have to be protected even in situations where the number of students enrolled is lower than originally planned.
IP.B.4.1.3. Student tuition fees are calculated in relation to the average tuition costs per academic year.
IP.B.4.1.4. High-performing students and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are materially supported in their educational and extra-curricular activities.
IP.B.4.1.5. Students are informed about the financial assistance possibilities offered by HEI and how to use the tuition fees.

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IP.B.4.1.6. The HIA shall provide proof of the organisation and operation of its accounts by means of the inventory register, the balance sheet, the budget outturn account and the management report, which shall show that the expenditure incurred is in accordance with the legislation in force, the revenue received and its destination, and the non-profit nature of the HEI.
IP.B.4.1.7. The accounting activity is computerised and the aim is to adapt the software used to the legal provisions.
IP.B.4.1.8. Audit, public accountability and transparency are in accordance with legal requirements and the HEI demonstrates internal and external audit of its financial activity. The balance sheet, the budget outturn account and the results of the external audit of the financial statements are made public following the Senate's review.
Area C. Quality Management
Criterion C.1. Strategies and procedures for quality assurance
S.C.1.1. Structures and policies for quality assurance
IP.C.1.1.1. HEI has a central Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee and faculty committees working in an integrated way. The Commission for Quality Assessment and Assurance is established and has the composition established according to the legislation in force and coordinates the application of procedures and the conduct of internal evaluation activities at institutional, subject and programme level.
IP.C.1.1.2. A culture of quality is actively promoted at all levels in the HEI/organisation, actions are taken to promote mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship, and the HEI/organisation has procedures in place to address student grievances.
IP.C.1.1.3. Students are involved in all quality assurance processes and structures at all institutional levels.
IP.C.1.1.4. For quality assessment and monitoring, the central committee sets qualitative and quantitative *benchmarks* against other HEIs in the country.
IP.C.1.1.4. Ref. 1: For quality assessment and monitoring, the central committee sets qualitative and quantitative benchmarks against other HEIs abroad.
IP.C.1.1.5. The HEI/organisation has strategies and policies focused on quality assurance and has the means to achieve it. These are known in each organisational structure of the HEI and stimulate the participation of every member of the teaching and research staff, students and other staff in internal quality assurance.
IP.C.1.1.6. The HEI/organisation has quality procedures and standards for its core processes in areas such as teaching, evaluation, scientific research, internationalisation, cooperation and services for the benefit of society.
IP.C.1.1.7. Corrective actions are systematically implemented when dysfunctions or non-conformities highlighted in internal and external evaluations and/or following complaints are identified.

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IP.C.1.1.8. The HEI reports annually on how it is achieving the programme's provisions on quality assurance: academic performance, research results, institution image, material base, student support and evidence of the application of quality policies. That report is public.
Criterion C.2. Procedures for the initiation, monitoring and periodic review of quality assurance programmes and activities
S.C.2.1. Approval, monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programmes and degree completion documents
IP.C.2.1.1. Regulations on the approval, monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programmes and degree completion documents exist, apply and provide for the involvement of all stakeholders, i.e. students, graduates and employers in the processes of designing and reviewing university study programmes.
IP.C.2.1.2. The HEI updates university study programmes taking into account: identified labour market perspectives; methodological innovation in teaching-learning-assessment processes; the potential of material, financial and human resources; student results at the end of an academic year and study period; employability rate of graduates in the field of study; dropout rate; study programme relevance.
IP.C.2.1.3. The Regulation provides for periodic, usually annual, quality evaluations per study programme and per institution.
IP.C.2.1.4. Diplomas are issued in accordance with the requirements of the university qualification, based on expected learning outcomes.
IP.C.2.1.4. Ref. 1: Study programmes are reviewed regularly, in consultation with students, graduates and employers, to match the dynamics of the market for academic and professional qualifications.
IP.C.2.1.4. Ref. 2: Study programmes are reviewed by European and international comparison based on a set of professional benchmarks.
IP.C.2.1.5. Graduates receive a free Diploma Supplement containing all the information required by the regulations in force.
Criterion C.3. Objective and transparent procedures for assessing learning outcomes
S.C.3.1. Test results assessment
IP.C.3.1.1. The HEI/organisation has a set of rules and regulations for the assessment and marking of students, which is rigorously and consistently applied.
IP.C.3.1.2. According to the regulations, at least one other specialist teacher participates in the examination, in addition to the course holder.
IP.C.3.1.3. There is a procedure for students to challenge the assessment and for the resolution of appeals, which is made known to them.

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IP.C.3.1.4. The assessment is based on the forms mentioned in the subject sheets and are made known to the students. The forms of assessment are diverse and encourage critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, etc.
IP.C.3.1.4. Ref. 1: An external examiner may participate in the examination/assessment.
IP.C.3.1.5. Student assessment procedures are focused on learning outcomes and announced to students. Students are given information after the assessment (feedback).
IP.C.3.1.6. Formative assessment ensures continuity and consistency in learning and is carried out during each semester.
IP.C.3.1.7. The number and distribution of examination forms in a semester are organised in such a way as to ensure the necessary time for both student preparation and the assessment process.
IP.C.3.1.8. Student appeals on evaluations are dealt with in accordance with the appeals procedure.
IP.C.3.1.9. Completion of university studies involves the production of a bachelor's thesis/diploma/dissertation/doctoral thesis, which demonstrates the student's ability to complete a given task independently and to the required standard.
Criterion C.4. Procedures for regular evaluation of the quality of teaching staff
S.C.4.1. Quality of teaching and research staff
IP.C.4.1.1. The HEI/organisation shall ensure the competence of its teaching and research staff and implement transparent processes for recruitment, integration and development of staff, in accordance with the national regulations in force.
IP.C.4.1.2. The qualifications and competences of the teaching staff correspond to the academic requirements of the study programmes.
IP.C.4.1.3. Depending on the specificities of the study programme, the HEI determines the optimal ratio between the total number of students corresponding to the approved tuition capacity and the number of full time, full time and associate teachers, respecting the specific standards set by ARACIS, in comparison with international good practice or with the training requirements for regulated professions in the European Union. In the quality assessment a teacher is considered to be tenured in one university.
IP.C.4.1.4. The HEI/organisation promotes and provides continuous professional development for teachers, based on annual/multi-annual programmes.
IP.C.4.1.4. Ref. 1.: The pedagogical training of university teachers is carried out in specialised training and innovation centres/departments.
IP.C.4.1.5. HEI supports the participation of teaching and teaching assistants in national and international mobility programmes for education and research.
S.C.4.2. The HEI/organisation has transparent mechanisms and procedures in place for the regular appraisal of teaching, research, support and administrative staff
IP.C.4.2.1. Peer review is organised annually and is based on clear and public procedures.

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IP.C.4.2.2. For each department there is a committee for the annual evaluation of the teaching and research performance of each teacher/researcher. This committee draws up an annual report on the quality of teaching and research staff.
IP.C.4.2.3. Teaching staff evaluation by students is compulsory and is performed every semester, exclusively in the absence of any external factor and with the guarantee of confidentiality of the evaluator. The evaluation results are confidential, accessible only to the department director, the dean, the rector and the person evaluated.
IP.C.4.2.4. The results of teaching staff evaluation by students are reported individually, statistically processed by departments, faculties and HEIs, and analysed in order to take measures to improve the quality of teaching.
IP.C.4.2.5. Teaching staff is self-evaluated and evaluated annually by the department director. The annual evaluation is multi-criteria.
IP.C.4.2.6. The HEI/organisation has transparent and effective procedures for evaluating the performance of teaching and administrative staff, including students.
Criterion C.5. Accessibility of appropriate learning resources
S.C.5.1. Learning resources and student services
IP.C.5.1.1. The HEI/organisation provides learning resources - textbooks, treatises, bibliographical references, anthologies, etc. - for each study programme in libraries, resource centres, etc., in classical or electronic format and free of charge. In addition to electronic access, the university library/resource centre has an appropriate number of national and international printed volumes and subscriptions to major national and international journals. Each library/resource centre has a programme tailored to the needs of students.
IP.C.5.1.2. Teaching materials are designed based on modern pedagogical principles using digital technologies and experiential teaching methods.
IP.C.5.1.3. Study programmes taught in languages other than Romanian have study resources in the libraries in the teaching language, of adequate quality and in sufficient numbers.
IP.C.5.1.4. The ratio of available learning resources to the number of students is such that each student has free access to any resource, according to the objectives and requirements of the study programmes.
IP.C.5.1.5. The HEI/organisation ensures appropriate access to learning resources for students with special needs or disabilities.
IP.C.5.1.6. HEI/organisation provides modern teaching and learning resources (e-learning platforms, databases, virtual libraries, simulators, etc.) for all forms of education: full-time learning, part-time learning (PTL) and distance learning (ID).
IP.C.5.1.7. The HEI/organisation applies policies to support students from disadvantaged social groups and students with learning difficulties.
IP.C.5.1.8. Internal quality assurance structures monitor the teaching process so that each teacher applies up-to-date student-centred teaching, learning and assessment strategies for each subject.

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IP.C.5.1.8. Ref. 1: HEI has a laboratory for analysis, research and formulation of innovative teaching/learning strategies involving teaching staff and students.
IP.C.5.1.8. Ref. 2: HEI applies alternative and modern teaching methods, according to students' learning ability, to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills and to reduce the dropout rate.
IP.C.5.1.9. HEI has programmes to encourage high achievers and to help students with learning difficulties to catch up or adapt to the academic environment in order to reduce drop-out.
IP.C.5.1.10. The HEI/organisation ensures that students receive adequate support from teachers (mentoring and tutoring activities, etc.) to progress in their learning.
IP.C.5.1.11. The HEI/organisation has dedicated structures and procedures to facilitate internal and external student mobility.
IP.C.5.1.11. Ref. 1: HEI participates in international educational/research programmes, which allows the institution to complement its resources.
IP.C.5.1.12. HEI carries out community engagement activities for the benefit of students to strengthen their democratic values and civic responsibility.
IP.C.5.1.12. Ref. 1: HEI supports students involved in community, cultural, sports and volunteer activities.
IP.C.5.1.13. HEI has social, cultural and sports services for students (accommodation, sports facilities, various counselling services, etc.). Students are informed about the existence of these services.
IP.C.5.1.14. The HEI strategic plan provides for the diversification and improvement of student services, which are regularly monitored and evaluated, including by surveying student perceptions of their quality.
IP.C.5.1.15. HEI provides students with the necessary infrastructure and resources to carry out their own extra-curricular activities and those of student organisations.
IP.C.5.1.16. HEI provides social services and dormitory accommodation for students living outside the locality, in comfortable and well-equipped conditions.
IP.C.5.1.16. Ref. 1: HEI offers special programmes to ensure quality student life, which it monitors and evaluates regularly. HEI analyses examples of good practice at national and international level on improving student services and offers solutions.
IP.C.5.1.16. Ref. 2: HEI offers different categories of students services specially designed for them (crèches, kindergartens for students' children, etc.).
Criterion C.6. Internal quality assurance database
S.C.6.1. Information systems

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IP.C.6.1.1. The HEI/organisation has an IT system that facilitates the collection, processing and analysis of data and information relevant to institutional quality assessment and assurance. The strategic objectives and operational decisions of the HEI are based on the information collected and analysed.
IP.C.6.1.2. HEI records the results of students ' academic activity in accordance with the legislation in force using catalogues, registers, single register (RMU), summary documents, school reports , diplomas, diplomasupplements , etc., in physical and electronic format.
IP.C.6.1.2. Ref. 1: HEI collects information on the state of quality in other HEIs in the country and abroad, which it compares itself with and on the basis of which it formulates differentiated benchmarks.
S.C.6.2. HEI database on internal quality assurance
IP.C.6.2.1. The HEI quality assurance database is continuously updated with all relevant information.
IP.C.6.2.1. Ref. 1: The database has a secure back-up system, where data is updated together with the main database.
Criterion C.7. Transparency of information of public interest on study programmes and, where appropriate, certificates, diplomas and qualifications offered
S.C.7.1. Public information on the mission and work of the HEI/organisation
IP.C.7.1.1. The HEI/organisation and all its faculties provide information and data, quantitative and qualitative, current and accurate, on qualifications, degree programmes, diplomas, teaching and research staff, facilities offered to students, and on any issues of interest to the public in general and students in particular.
IP.C.7.1.2. Students are provided with a student guide, updated annually, with all relevant information about their academic career, extra-curricular activities and support services available, their rights and the opportunities offered by the HEI/organisation.
S.C.7.2. Response of the HEI/organisation to the request for public information on the mission and work of the institution from stakeholders
IP.C.7.2.1. The HEI/organisation responds to requests for public information, as required by law, through a dedicated internal structure staffed by qualified personnel.
IP.C.7.2.1. Ref. 1: HEI systematically informs the interested public of the relevant activities it has carried out and makes use of its recommendations.
Criterion C.8. Functioning of education quality assurance structures according to law
S.C.8.1. Institutional structure for quality assurance in education
IP.C.8.1.1. The internal structures for quality assurance of education are in compliance with the legal provisions and are continuously operating. The application of procedures and the implementation of evaluation and quality assurance activities are coordinated at the level of the HEI/organisation.

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IP.C.8.1.2. The evaluation procedures on the quality of education have been approved by the University Senate.
IP.C.8.1.3. The annual internal quality assessment report is approved by the University Senate, disseminated through publication, including in electronic format, and makes proposals for improving the quality of education.
IP.C.8.1.4. Internal education quality assurance structures are staffed with qualified personnel who support HEI staff in documenting and monitoring measures to increase the quality of education, research and social and support services offered to students.
IP.C.8.1.4. Ref. 1: HEI continuously implements measures to improve the quality of education and collaborates with other HEIs at home and abroad to identify and adopt best practices in quality assurance.
IP.C.8.1.4. Ref. 2: Quality assurance policy, as part of strategic management, is budgeted.
Criterion C.9. Regular external quality assurance
S.C.9.1. HEIs undergo regular external quality assurance assessment procedures in accordance with the ESG and national regulations
IP.C.9.1.1. Accredited HEIs and their educational structures (study programmes, master's fields, doctoral studies) are subject to external quality assessment on a cyclical basis, according to the legislative provisions in force.
IP.C.9.1.2. The HEI implements the recommendations made by members of the external quality assessment committees, partners and beneficiaries.
Criterion C.10. Accuracy of reporting required by the legislation in force
S.C.10.1. Preparation, drafting and submission of reports required by law by the competent institutions
IP.C.10.1.1. The HEI/organisation is obliged to draw up and submit the reports required by law by the competent institutions, ensuring the accuracy of the data and compliance with deadlines.

6.2 Annex 2. Timetable for the organisation and conduct of the external institutional review mission

No.	Activities	Time interval
1.	The External Quality Assessment Department of ARACIS takes note of the Application for External Assessment submitted to the Agency by the HEI, or the submission of another legal document on the basis of which the external assessment is initiated, and of the fulfilment of the legal conditions for institutional assessment.	
2.	Conclusion of the Appraisal Contract, payment of the appraisal fee and submission of the IER.	Max 15 days after request

No.	Activities	Time interval
3.	Establishment of the calendar of the evaluation process (mission director and HEI rector), at ARACIS headquarters or online.	Max 15 days from contract signing
4.	EEP approval and communication to the HEI.	Max 10 days from contract signing
5.	Communication to ARACIS by the HEI of any appeals concerning the composition of the EEP	Max 10 days after EEP approval
6.	Final approval of the EEP composition by ARACIS.	Max 10 days after expiry of the deadline for lodging an appeal
7.	Receipt of the institutional-level IER (paper and electronic) and electronic annexes by ARACIS.	Max 30 days from contract signing
8.	Preliminary analysis of the IER by EEP members and request for possible additions/clarifications.	Max 15 days after receipt of the IER by ARACIS
9.	Receipt of possible completions/clarifications from the HEI by the EEP.	Max 15 days after the EEP sends the request
5.	The evaluation team visits the HEI.	Max 60 days after receipt of any additions/clarifications from the HEI
6.	Registration with ARACIS of the Mission Director's and Coordinator's Report, the Students' Report and the Foreign Evaluator's Report. - The EEP Report and the sending to the HEI of the Preliminary Report/Letter with preliminary results.	Max 30 days after the visit (5 months after signing the contract)
7.	HEI responds to the letter containing the preliminary results of the institutional review.	Max 15 days after receipt of all reports - EEP Report (5.5 months after contract signature)
8.	The External Quality Assessment Department discusses and approves the EEP Report. The Department discusses the External Quality Assessment Department Report and proposes a follow-up plan as appropriate. The report of the External Quality Assessment Department is presented and discussed in the ARACIS Board, which prepares the Agency's external Institutional Assessment Report and the final form of the monitoring plan, if applicable, in the presence of the Mission Director. The Council orders the publication of the EEP Report on the ARACIS website. It is recommended that the response letter of the evaluated HEI is published as an annex.	Max 15 days from receipt of HEI response (6 months from contract signature)



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