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

PART III

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

PART III

GUIDELINES ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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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 for bachelor's studies

The process of external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes is based on the following legislative instruments:

a) National Education Law No 1/2011, as amended and supplemented (in particular Title III - Higher Education, Chapter III - Organisation of University Studies, Section 10: Cycle I - Bachelor's Studies);
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

In accordance with the National Education Law no. 1/2011, as amended, the provisional operating authorisation and accreditation of an bachelor's degree program in a higher education institution, together with the determination of the maximum number of students who may be enrolled in a year of study and who may be awarded a degree, is made by Government Decision, following the external evaluation carried out by ARACIS or by another quality assurance agency, in the country or abroad, registered in the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR).

1.2 Objectives of the Guidelines

Bachelor's degree programmes (BDP) can be organised by *higher education institutions* (HEIs) authorised to operate provisionally or accredited, as well as by organisations interested in the provision of higher education.

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.

bachelor's degree programmes operate legally and can enrol students if they have received ARACIS provisional/accreditation approval and are approved by order of the Minister of Education.

The academic evaluation of an bachelor's degree programme focuses mainly on the following aspects:

a) identifying the learning experience offered to students through a higher education programme that provides access to a distinct academic qualification;
b) flexibility in the organisation of the external evaluation mission so that the work of the Agency's expert evaluators does not disrupt the smooth running of the teaching process;
c) mutual respect, so that the process takes place in a collegial atmosphere;
d) maintaining and continuously improving academic standards and enhancing the learning infrastructure;
e) using internal evaluation as a key document, which should be reflective and evaluative;
f) directly accessible data and evidence for all allegations and statements in the Internal Evaluation Report (IER), provided to the Agency's expert evaluators and all interested parties.

bachelor's degree programmes are the first cycle of university studies and are completed through level six of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), according to ISCED. These study programmes last three to six years, depending on the case, and correspond to 180 (three years), 240 (four years), 300 (five years), 360 (six years) transferable ECTS credits.

The diploma awarded after completion of a PSU, following completion of the study programme and passing of the final examination, certifies that its holders have obtained the skills, knowledge and abilities specific to one or more occupations/qualifications corresponding to qualification level six of the CNC.

Bachelor's degree programmes may be organised in full-time, part-time and distance learning, except for those regulated at European Union level, which may only be organised in full-time learning.

A bachelor's degree programme can be taught in Romanian, in national minority languages and in a foreign language of international circulation.

A bachelor's degree programme is distinguished from other degree programmes in the same field of study by a minimum of 20% of the total number of subject and specialist subjects in the curriculum.

Quality assurance of bachelor's degree programmes is achieved through the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System procedures in higher education institutions. The standards and performance indicators are the same for the provisional operating authorisation, accreditation and periodic evaluation of a university degree programme. The main differences relate to the level of achievement of performance indicators according to the objective of the external evaluation. The Internal Evaluation Report (IER) explicitly and documentedly presents data and information that responds to how the criteria, standards and

performance indicators for the three areas of quality assurance: institutional capacity, educational effectiveness and quality management are met.

Provisional authorisation to operate, accreditation and periodic evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes organised by an HEI/organisation are carried out separately for each form of education, each teaching language and each geographical location in which they are carried out.

In order to obtain provisional operating authorisation/accreditation, as well as for the periodic evaluation of an bachelor's degree programme, the HEI/organisation must demonstrate that all quality standards associated with the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes are met.

The external evaluation procedure is completed within six months of the date of signing the contract with ARACIS, based on the internal evaluation report and the external evaluation carried out by ARACIS.

2 Specific requirements for the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes

bachelor's degree programmes are organised and structured in such a way as to comply with legal requirements, and their quality is taken into account when analysing their quality:

a) to achieve the mission and objectives of the bachelor's degree programme;
b) to achieve a teaching, learning and assessment process that is centred on student needs and to provide appropriate student support services that enable the achievement of the stated learning outcomes;
c) ensuring adequate human, material and financial resources;
d) compliance with regulations on admission, transfer, student mobility, course and graduation;
e) compliance with internal quality assurance procedures;
f) compliance with the legislation in force.

2.1 Mission and objectives of the bachelor's programme

The mission and objectives of the bachelor's degree programme under assessment must reflect the requirements of the socio-economic and cultural environment, employers and other labour market actors and be consistent with the targeted qualifications.

The objectives of the evaluated bachelor's degree programme should take into account: the mission of the university, employment opportunities for graduates in the labour market, potential further developments in the field of study, opportunities for further study at Master's level, and student interests.

2.2 The teaching, learning and assessment process

Teaching, learning and assessment activities must be integrated into a teaching strategy focused on students' needs and interests, enabling students to achieve the stated learning outcomes of the bachelor's degree programme being assessed. Teaching and learning methods should be based on theoretical models and strategies specific to adult psycho-pedagogy and may include teaching activities such as lectures, seminars, laboratory activities, project management, tutoring activities, individual study, case studies, research and internships, etc. The teaching-learning process should be flexible enough to take into account the different learning capacity of students, thus facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills and reducing the drop-out rate.

The academic year is structured over two semesters of 14 weeks each, with an average of 22-28 hours/week, depending on the fields of study, with the exception of study programmes regulated by European Union Directives. Each semester has 30 ECTS transferable study credits for compulsory and optional subjects, regardless of the form of study.

The curricula, published on the HEI/organisation's website, must be drawn up in accordance with specific ARACIS standards and contain relevant information on how the stated learning outcomes are to be achieved. They allow the student to choose a flexible pathway, with the presence of optional and elective subjects or alternative pathways as appropriate. The curricula will also include practical activities and the preparation of the bachelor thesis/diploma project.

The subject files contain information on: position in the curriculum and type of subject, subject content, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods, prerequisites or other requirements specific to bachelor's degree programmes.

Methods of assessment of learning outcomes may include: oral examination, written examination, submission of portfolios, submission of reports on practical activities, essays, oral presentations, artwork, etc. Forms of assessment are appropriately chosen to enable students to achieve the stated learning objectives of the study programme. At least 50% of the forms of assessment of the subjects set out in the curriculum are examinations.

The HEI/organisation will pursue work related to the design, delivery, assessment and updating of curriculum content and the implementation of student-centred learning capable of providing quality learning experiences for students.

2.3 Human, material and financial resources

The resources allocated to the bachelor's programme evaluated must be sufficient to ensure a quality teaching process.

Laboratories, computer rooms and workshops must be equipped with the specific equipment necessary for the practical activities of the bachelor's programme

evaluated. The organisation of teaching activities in these spaces must ensure safe access for students and the possibility to carry out practical activities, especially those contributing to projects, practical work, art work, sports or musical activities, etc.

The educational infrastructure must be modern and adaptable to different contexts and teaching/learning methods (e.g. classrooms with desks and mobile chairs, open space classrooms, etc.). The HEI/organisation will also seek to constantly update the existing facilities in laboratories, classrooms, seminar rooms, library, etc. according to the students' needs and interests. The educational infrastructure is positively assessed by teaching staff and students.

The ratio between the number of students and teaching staff must ensure the quality of teaching and learning and be in line with the provisions of the specific standards for each specialisation.

Teaching staff must meet the requirements set by the legislation in force, have the training and experience appropriate to the subjects taught and carry out scientific research in the field of the subjects covered by the teaching load they cover. Holders of the subjects shall hold a doctoral degree in the field of the subjects of the post held and shall fulfil at least one of the following conditions:

a) have a bachelor's degree in the field of the subjects taught;
b) be doctoral supervisors in the field of the disciplines taught;
c) have a doctoral dissertation topic in the field of the subjects taught.

The HEI/organisation must have a continuous professional development plan that enables teachers to update their specialist, psycho-pedagogical knowledge and their knowledge of the use of new educational technologies, i.e. to provide them with the skills to adapt to the dynamic needs of new generations of students.

Support services for students should be easily accessible, include tutoring, information and documentation facilities, access to national and/or international databases, support in identifying internship places, etc.

The HEI/organisation has an appropriately sized budget that ensures the delivery of the assessed study programme according to quality standards. The financial resources approved and allocated to the assessed study programme are so sized as to ensure that any variation between planned and actual financial performance will not compromise academic standards and student interests.

2.4 Admission, transfer, mobility, students' academic progress and degree completion

The requirements for admission, transfer, mobility and academic progression of students, i.e. for the completion of studies, must be specified in the study contracts and made public, and the results of these processes must be monitored by the HEI.

The HEI must ensure that students are informed about: admission conditions, the existence of regulations concerning their academic progress, student rights and obligations, subjects in the curriculum, services provided by the university, assessment procedures, the amount of fees, where applicable, the material base of the university and faculty, information about legally constituted student associations, how to access scholarships and other funding, mobility, grants awarded, etc.

Students are supported and motivated to carry out research activities, are involved in research projects and are financially supported to participate in national and international scientific conferences/sympoHEI.

Student record books provide essential information on student activity. Internal regulations on monitoring students' academic progress must be in place and enforced, and the data collected and analysed must be used to review and develop study programmes. In addition, the number of dropouts and the reasons for dropping out should be recorded.

2.5 Internal quality assurance

Internal quality assurance procedures are in place at the level of the assessed BDP and are in line with the quality assurance policy of the HEI/organisation.

The evaluated bachelor's degree programme must be supported by effective quality assurance policies and procedures. The management system must be able to ensure the systematic achievement of learning outcomes and continuous improvement of the study programme.

A clear procedure for reviewing the assessed BDP is applied at regular intervals or whenever the changing socio-economic environment requires it, involving students, graduates and employer representatives, and using all relevant data, including an assessment of student outcomes in relation to the stated objectives of the study programme and in relation to the labour market.

At the assessed BDP level there is a procedure in place and a tool for collecting feedback from students for all subjects in the curriculum, allowing for effective evaluation of all teachers teaching those subjects. It also envisages a follow-up strategy for graduates and concrete mechanisms to collect regular data and feedback from them.

Information on quality assurance is published on the website of the faculties/departments organising the study programme assessed.

3 Degree of achievement of standards and performance indicators

The grades for meeting the performance indicators (PIs) are:

a) met - awarded if the performance indicator is met;

b) partially met - awarded if the performance indicator is not met, but can be met within one year;
c) not met - awarded if the performance indicator is not met and cannot be met within one year.

Decisions on external evaluation opinions, proposed by the Expert Evaluation Panels, take into account the level of compliance with the criteria, standards and performance indicators used for the evaluation and the achievements of the HEI/organisation.

4 Objectives of the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes

The external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes may have one of the following objectives, as appropriate:

1. *Provisional operating authorisation for a new bachelor's degree programme;*
2. *Accreditation of an bachelor's degree programme authorised to operate provisionally;*
3. *Periodic evaluation of an accredited bachelor's degree programme.*

4.1 Provisional authorisation of a new bachelor's degree programme

Provisional operating authorisation is a process that precedes the actual provision of educational services by an HEI/organisation initiating an bachelor's degree programme. The process consists, on the one hand, in verifying that the HEI/organisation complies with the legal conditions and other regulations in force and, on the other hand, in analysing its capacity to ensure the minimum level of quality of the proposed educational offer.

Provisional operating authorisation is the first part of the accreditation process.

External evaluations for provisional authorisation to operate may be carried out for new bachelor's degree programmes offered by higher education institutions accredited or authorised to operate provisionally, as well as by organisations intending to obtain provisional authorisation to operate at institutional level to become a provider of higher education education.

The procedure for the provisional authorisation of operation of an bachelor's degree programme consists of going through the internal evaluation and external evaluation stages based on documents, records, supporting documents regarding the fulfillment of criteria, standards and performance indicators set out in the ARACIS Methodology and Guidelines. The provisional operating authorisation procedure is completed within six months of the date of signing the contract with ARACIS.

The methodological steps for the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes with a view to provisional authorisation are set out in Section 6 of these guidelines.

If the externally assessed bachelor's degree programme meets the quality standards, ARACIS recommends the Ministry of Education to grant the provisional operating authorisation. Provisional operating authorisation grants higher education institutions the right to initiate and conduct the educational process and to organise admission to the assessed study programme.

At the level of the university study programme authorised to operate provisionally, the teaching process may be carried out from the academic year whose starting date is after the date of obtaining the ARACIS approval and the approval of the Government Decision until two years from the date of graduation of the first class. HEI is obliged to transmit to ARACIS the year of graduation of the first class.

If it is found that the quality standards are not met, ARACIS informs the MoE and the HEI/applicant organisation that the evaluated degree programme is not provisionally authorised to operate. The HEI/organisation shall request within one year a new external evaluation from the agency that carried out the previous external evaluation, after the problems reported have been solved. Otherwise, the Agency's report remains final. The costs of the additional assessment are borne by the HEI/organisation.

In summary, the external evaluation process for the provisional authorisation of bachelor's degree programmes is as follows:

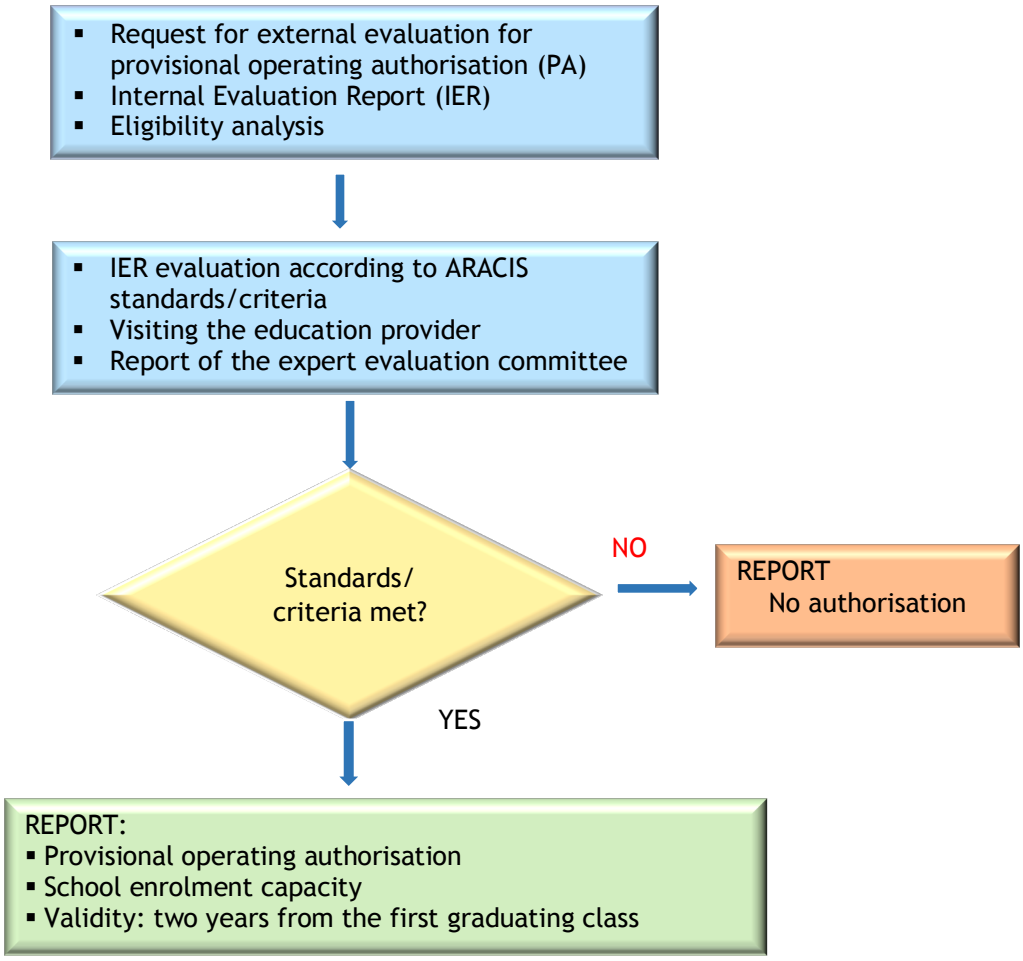


Figure 1. External evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes for provisional authorisation

Bachelor's degree programmes found not to meet the quality standards for two successive evaluations for provisional authorisation to operate may no longer be proposed by the HEI/organisation for external assessment.

ARACIS carries out monitoring activities to analyse the fulfilment of quality standards, as well as the status of implementation by the HEI of the recommendations in the *Report of the Expert Evaluators Commission*, validated by the ARACIS Board, for the bachelor's degree programme authorised to operate provisionally. Monitoring is usually organised halfway between two successive external evaluations, carried out in accordance with the law, or whenever deemed necessary. Where, following a monitoring process, non-compliance with quality standards is found, the provisions of Article 34 of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 on ensuring the quality of education, approved with amendments by Law no. 87/2006, as amended, apply.

4.2 Accreditation of an bachelor's degree programme authorised to operate provisionally

Accreditation of an bachelor's degree programme is the stage following provisional authorisation to operate. Accreditation grants HEI the right to conduct the educational process and organise admission to studies, issue diplomas, certificates and other academic documents, recognised nationally and internationally, as appropriate, and organise the final examination for the accredited Bachelor's degree programme.

External accreditation assessment is carried out for bachelor's degree programmes authorised to operate provisionally, at the request of the HEI. The deadline for applying for accreditation is two years from the date of graduation of the first class.

The methodological steps for the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes with a view to provisional authorisation are set out in Section 6 of these guidelines.

If the bachelor's degree programme meets the quality standards, ARACIS proposes to the Ministry of Education to grant accreditation for a period of 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 of bachelor's degree programmes.

Once a bachelor's programme has achieved accreditation, the next external evaluations will be periodic evaluations.

HEIs may request external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes before the expiry of the period of validity of the accreditation.

If it is found that the minimum quality standards are not met, ARACIS informs both MER and HEI about the non-accreditation of the bachelor's degree programme. The HEI may request within one year a new external evaluation by the agency that carried out the previous external evaluation, once the issues raised have been addressed. Otherwise, the Agency's report remains final and the provisions of GEO 75 of 2005 on quality assurance in education apply. The costs of the additional evaluation shall be borne by the applicant HEI.

Bachelor's degree programmes for which it is found that the quality standards have not been met for two successive accreditation evaluations go into liquidation, in compliance with the provisions of GEO no. 75 of 2005 on quality assurance of education, respectively the enrolment and enrolment of new students in the respective degree programme is terminated, and the HEI is obliged to continue enrolling students enrolled in previous academic years, enrolled on a date prior to the date of issue of the final report.

In summary, the external evaluation process for the accreditation of bachelor's degree programmes is as follows:

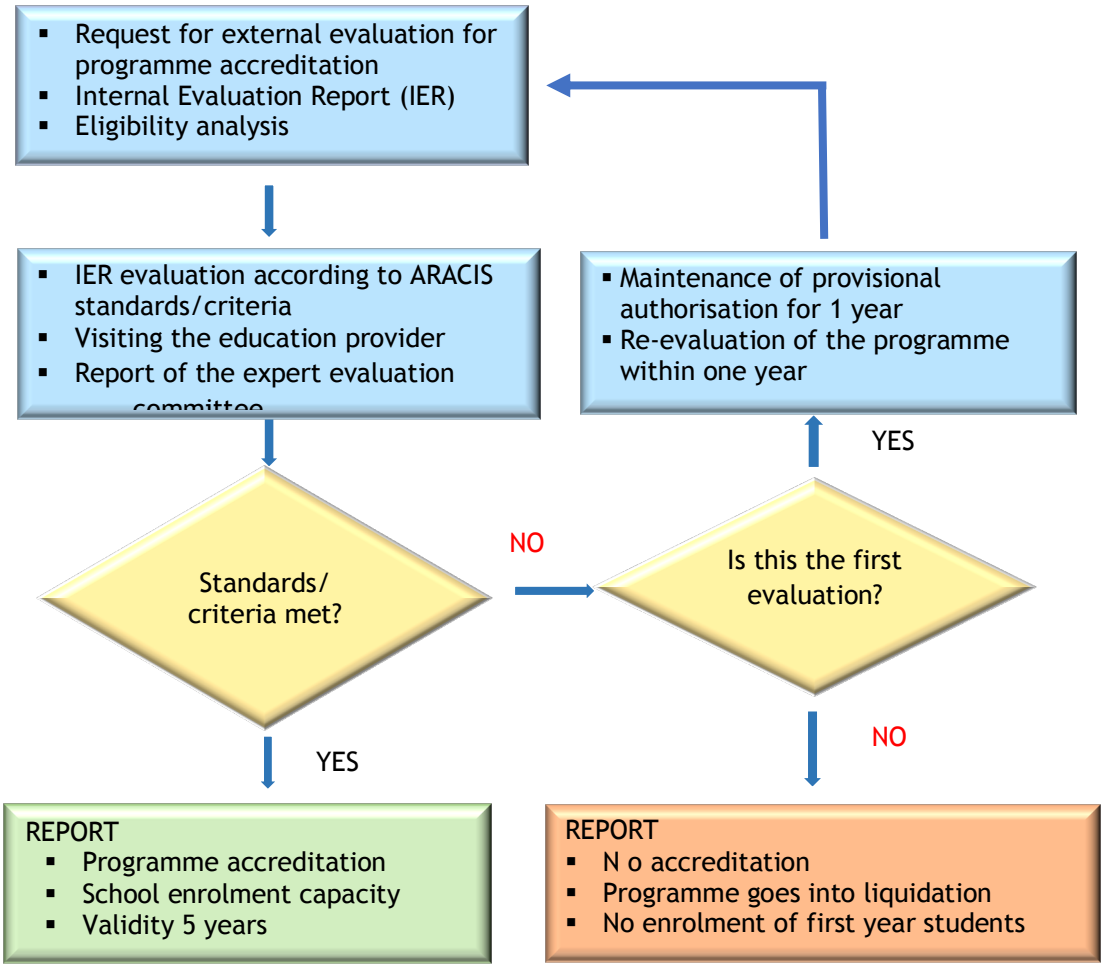


Figure 2. External evaluation of study programmes for accreditation

4.3 Periodic evaluation of an accredited bachelor's degree programme

The periodic evaluation of accredited bachelor's degree programmes is carried out taking as a reference the standards and performance indicators from the accreditation process.

The methodological steps for the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes for periodic assessment are set out in Section 6 of these guidelines.

If the bachelor's degree programme meets the minimum quality standards, ARACIS proposes to the Ministry of Education to maintain accreditation for a period of five years.

ARACIS monitors bachelor's degree programmes between two external periodic evaluations.

In summary, the external evaluation process for the periodic assessment of bachelor's degree programmes is as follows:

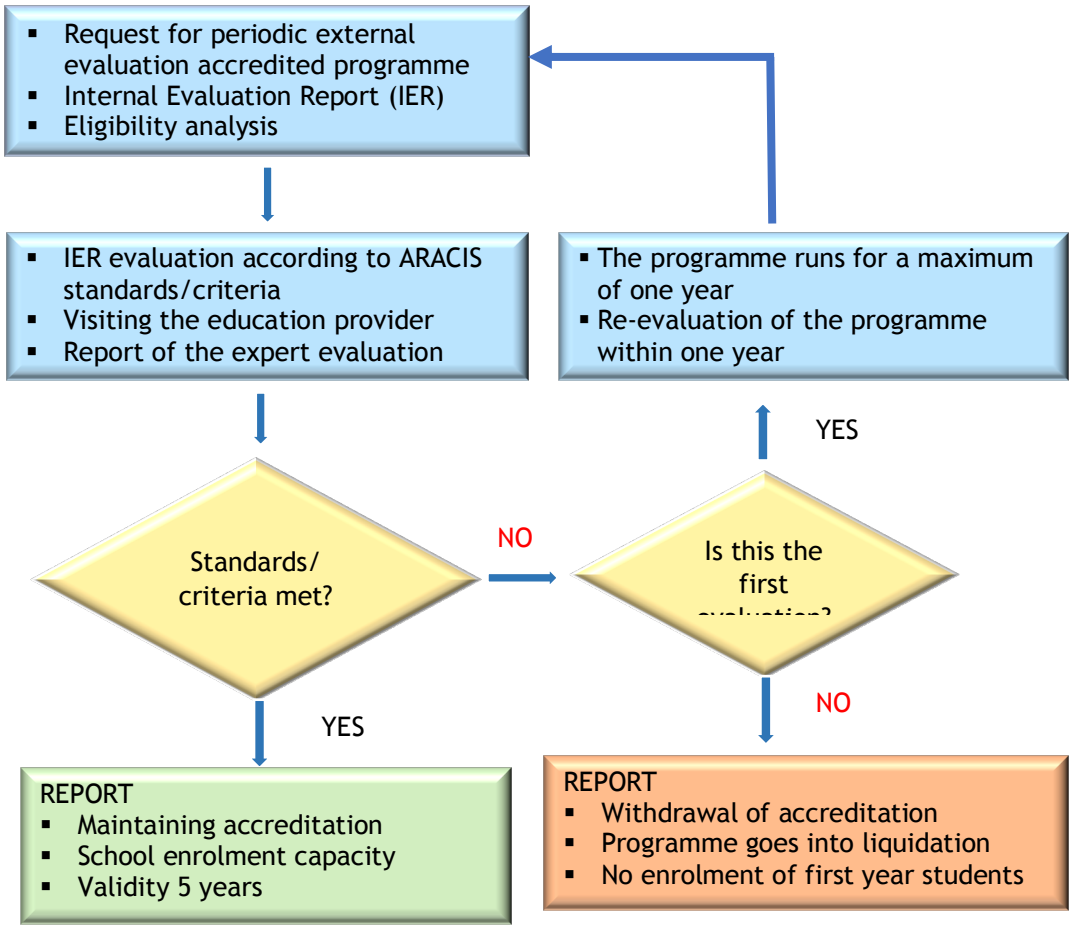


Figure 3 Periodic external evaluation of bachelor's programmes

If it is found that the quality standards are not met, ARACIS informs both the MoE and the HEI of the *withdrawal of accreditation* of the assessed bachelor's degree programme. The HEI requests within one year a new external evaluation by the agency that carried out the previous external evaluation, after the issues raised have been addressed. Otherwise, the report drawn up by the Agency shall remain final and the provisions of Article 34 (2) of GEO no. 75/2005 on quality assurance in education, apply. The costs of the additional evaluation shall be borne by the applicant HEI.

Bachelor's degree programmes for which it is found that the quality standards have not been met for two successive periodic evaluations go into liquidation, in compliance with the provisions of GEO no. 75 of 2005 on ensuring the quality of education, i.e. the enrolment and enrolment of new students in the respective degree programme is terminated, and the HEI is required to continue enrolling students enrolled in previous academic years, enrolled on a date prior to the date of issue of the final report.

5 Stages of the external evaluation process of bachelor's degree programmes

The external evaluation of an bachelor's degree programme is carried out on the basis of *the External Evaluation Methodology, standards, benchmarks and list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, approved by Government Decision.

This section outlines the steps in the evaluation process of a BDP, based on the internal and external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes respectively.

The procedure for the periodic external evaluation process of a BDP shall take place within a maximum of 6 months from the date of signature of the external evaluation contract.

Stage 1. The **HEI/organisation submits an application to ARACIS** requesting the initiation of the external evaluation procedure for a Bachelor degree programme. The application states:

a) the name of the bachelor's degree programme, the form of education, the teaching language and the geographical location of the study programme under assessment;
b) *objective of the evaluation*: provisional operating authorisation, accreditation, periodic evaluation;
c) the *current status* of the bachelor's programme under evaluation;
d) the date, objective and outcome of the last external evaluation of the study programme under evaluation.

The application is accompanied by the ANC opinion/certificate from the ANC on the validation of the qualification for the bachelor's degree programme under evaluation.

Upon receipt of the application, ARACIS assesses its eligibility and contacts the HEI/organisation to conclude the external evaluation contract.

Stage 2. **ARACIS concludes with the HEI/applicant organisation** the contract for the external evaluation of the bachelor's degree programme under evaluation within 15 days from the date of receipt of the application. The external evaluation contract is for 6 months. At the conclusion of the contract, the IER of the BDP is also submitted.

Stage 3. **HEI/organisation** prepares the BDP *Internal Evaluation Report*.

The BDP *Internal Evaluation Report (IER*) is required in the external evaluation of the bachelor's degree programme and the determination of tuition capacity and will include documented responses to the requirements set out in **Annex 1** and data relevant to the degree programme evaluated, such as:

a) form of education (FTL, PTL, DL);

b) the geographical location where the teaching activities are/will be carried out;
c) teaching language;
d) the number of students enrolled, where applicable;
e) partnerships with universities/institutions at home and/or abroad;
f) other relevant particularities.

The *internal evaluation report* follows the structure and provisions of *the guidelines for the preparation of the internal evaluation report for the external evaluation of an bachelor's degree programme*, developed by ARACIS.

The content of *the Internal Assessment Report* shall comply with the areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators set out in the *Methodology* and presented in *Annex 1* of these *Guidelines*.

For the purpose of the IER, the HEI/organisation may include additional information and data in addition to that required to demonstrate compliance with standards and performance indicators. The HEI/organisation may also present relevant achievements according to its own reference standards adopted within the internal quality assurance system.

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:

a) The descriptive level shows how the bachelor's degree programme under evaluation meets the relevant standards and performance indicators. References to supporting data in Part B are given in the document;
b) 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 external evaluation and a section on actions planned to address the problems identified.

Part B includes:

a) Documents such as internal regulations, strategies, policies, procedures, guidelines, etc.;
b) Information, in the form of graphs, tables, etc.;
c) Information provided by various stakeholders interested in the development of the HEI.

The internal evaluation report shall also contain a section on the *positive and negative aspects of the internal quality assurance activity* corresponding to the period between two successive external evaluations, taking into account the results of the implementation of the recommendations referred to in the previous external evaluation.

The internal evaluation report will include relevant data and information about the bachelor's programme under evaluation, such as:

a) description of the mission and training objectives of the bachelor's degree programme;
b) student enrolment status by year of study since the last external evaluation;
c) the maximum number of students the institution wishes to enrol;
d) curriculum;
e) diploma supplement;
f) information on the design and implementation of student-centred teaching, learning and assessment methods and techniques and the provision of an effective system of support and assessment of student knowledge;
g) information on learning resources (textbooks, treatises, bibliographical references, access to databases, anthologies, etc.) available in libraries, resource centres, etc., in printed and/or electronic format;
h) information on the scientific research activity carried out by the higher education institution in the field of study of the BDP under evaluation and the involvement of students in this activity. Exploitation of research carried out through: publications for teaching purposes, scientific publications, technology transfer and dissemination through consultancy centres, science parks or other valorisation structures, production of new products, etc.;
i) description of the technical/material base, teaching and research/creation spaces allocated to the BDP under evaluation;
j) description of the *hardware* and *software* infrastructure that ensures the implementation and management of e-learning platforms;
k) information on the teaching and training/research/creative staff involved in the teaching, research and creative activities of the BDP under evaluation, specifying the extent to which the teaching staff are involved in teaching and research activities within and outside the applicant HEI/organisation;
l) information on the support services available to students enrolled in the study programme;
m) the degree of coverage by own and associated staff of all the posts in the function statements of the BDP subject to evaluation;
n) presentation of internal quality assurance procedures, showing the existence and application of quality assurance policies and their effectiveness and transparency. Evidence will be provided of the implementation for the BDP under evaluation of the respective procedures over the last three years, conclusions and measures to remedy the shortcomings identified.

Stage 4. The **HEI/organisation** submits to ARACIS the *Internal Evaluation Report*, necessary for the external evaluation of the BDP and the determination of the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in a study year,

within **15 days** of the submission of the application for external evaluation.[1]

Stage 5. The **ARACIS Accreditation Department** appoints an *Expert Evaluators Panel* (EEP) consisting of four to five evaluators. *Expert Evaluation Panel* is primarily responsible for carrying out the external evaluation.

The panel of expert evaluators is appointed within **30 days** of signing the contract with the HEI/applicant organisation. During the first ten days, ARACIS decides on the number and composition of the Expert Evaluation Committee, taking into account the specialisations of its members.

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

a) academics with teaching and research experience in the assessed BDP field;
b) a student representative from a nationally recognised student federation in Romania from the ARACIS RNE-S;
c) an employer or a representative of the economic sector relevant to the field of study of the assessed BDP, from the ARACIS RNE-A.

Representatives of the student association federations appoint the student assessor, who is enrolled in the bachelor/master/doctoral field of the assessed BDP.

The coordinator of the Expert Evaluation Committee will be appointed from among the experts of the ARACIS standing committee, relevant to the field of study of the BDP under evaluation.

When evaluating bachelor's degree programmes, at least one of the teaching staff members of the EEP must have knowledge of the teaching language of the study programme being evaluated. At the same time, a balanced gender representation will be taken into account when appointing the EEP, as far as possible

Once the ARACIS Board has approved the *Expert Evaluation Panel*, the HEI/organisation is informed of the composition of this Commission. The HEI/organisation may challenge the composition of the Expert Evaluation Panel within ten days, but may not propose experts. If the HEI/organisation has contested the composition of the Commission, the ARACIS Board shall examine the contestation and, after consultation with the Accreditation Department, may appoint within ten days other members of the Expert Evaluation Panel, whose

[1] *As a rule, stages 2 and 4 are carried out at the same time in order to streamline document traceability.*

composition remains final.

Stage 6. **Analysis of the internal evaluation report.** The Expert Evaluation Panel shall, within 15 days of appointment, review the submitted Internal Evaluation Report and may request the HEI/organisation to supplement the IER with additional information. The HEI/organisation shall provide the requested information within 15 days of the request for clarification being sent.

Stage 7. **The expert evaluator panel shall carry out** an evaluation visit to the HEI/applicant organisation, its premises and/or other locations relevant to the study programme under evaluation in order to make verifications and findings on the data presented in the submitted internal evaluation report as well as on other issues deemed relevant. The results of the verifications will be recorded by the members of the EEP in the *Report of the Expert Evaluators Panel*, which will be signed by all panel members.

The external evaluation visit lasts three days, including visits to the educational infrastructure of the HEI/organisation and meetings of the Expert Evaluation Panel with stakeholders on the organisation and functioning of the evaluated BDP.

The external evaluation visit includes:

a) preliminary meeting with members of the department/faculty/institution management to present the work plan for the visit;
b) meeting with university teaching staff carrying out teaching and support activities at the assessed BDP;
c) meeting with people in charge of educational management, with staff who administer students' schooling;
d) meeting with a representative group of students enrolled in BDP assessed in all years of study, including students representing student organisations;
e) meeting with a representative group of graduates of the evaluated BDP;
f) meeting with a representative group of employers in the sectors in which graduates of the study programme evaluated usually work. The number of participants in this group varies according to the sector of activity and geographical location of the HEI;
g) verification of all aspects contained in the IER;
h) to develop the views of the EEP and make recommendations;
i) final meeting with representatives of the HEI/organisation to present a summary of the main observations and recommendations made by the Expert Evaluation Panel.

The visit to the HEI/organisation is completed within three months from the date of receipt of the IER at ARACIS. The visit will take place within 30 days after the HEI/organisation has sent the additional information requested.

On the basis of ***the Internal Evaluation Report*** and the findings of the evaluation visit, the members of the EEP shall draw up *the* ***Report of the panel of expert evaluators***, which shall contain evaluations on the achievement of each performance indicator mentioned in ***Annex 1***. For each performance indicator, the extent to which it has been achieved will be established and recorded. The ***EEP Report*** will necessarily contain recommendations to improve the quality of the assessed BDP.

The members of the EEP propose an opinion on the provisional operating authorisation/accreditation/maintenance of accreditation and the maximum number of students that may be enrolled in a year of study or, where appropriate, the provisional operating authorisation/non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation of the bachelor's degree programme evaluated.

Once the visit to the applicant HEI/organisation is completed, the Expert Evaluation Panel has ten days to finalise the external evaluation report. The EEP report is accompanied by a *summary presentation of the results of the external evaluation,* containing a summary of positive and negative aspects, unmet or partially met performance indicators, recommendations, as well as the proposal for the opinion established by consensus of the members of the expert evaluation panel for the evaluated bachelor's degree programme, as set out **in Annex 3**.

Stage 8. **Transmission of *the Report of the Expert Evaluation Panel* to the HEI/Organisation**. *The coordinator of the panel of expert evaluators* shall forward the panel's report to *the contact person designated by the* applicant *HEI/organisation* for acknowledgement and possible reasoned comments within 10 days of receipt.

If the HEI/Organisation does not submit any views within the deadline, the Report of the Expert Evaluation Panel remains final.

Stage 9. **Analysis and endorsement by the ARACIS Standing Expert Committee** of the *Report of the Evaluation Expert Committee* finalised following the response received from the HEI/Organisation.

The ARACIS *Permanent Specialist Expert Commission* formulates any possible additions and proposes, on the basis of a report signed by all its members, an opinion on the provisional operating authorisation/accreditation/maintenance of accreditation or, where appropriate, provisional operating authorisation/non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation for the bachelor's degree programme evaluated. If the *External Evaluation Report* contains a significant number of indicators with a limited confidence rating, the Committee of Permanent Experts may propose to monitor the evaluated study programme for a period of 1-2 years, as appropriate.

Stage 10. The *EEP* **report**, with the additions of the ARACIS *Permanent Specialist Expert Committee*, and the response received from the

HEI/organisation are forwarded to the ARACIS *Accreditation Department*.

Stage 11. The ARACIS ***Accreditation Department*** reviews the *EEP Report*, the comments received from the HEI/organisation and the monitoring plan of the evaluated BDP and proposes to the ARACIS Board an opinion on provisional operating authorisation/accreditation/maintaining accreditation or provisional operating authorisation/non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation, as appropriate, within 20 days. The monitoring plan is intended to provide the basis for an ongoing dialogue with the HEI/organisation and the persons responsible for IQAS at the different institutional levels.

Stage 12. The **ARACIS Board** decides, on the basis of *the EEP Report* validated by the Accreditation Department and the *monitoring plan*, on the opinion granted to the evaluated BDP:

a) provisional operating authorisation/accreditation/maintenance of accreditation, as appropriate, and the maximum number of students that may be enrolled in a year of study;
b) provisional non-accreditation/non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation, as appropriate.

The decision of the ARACIS Board shall be communicated to the HEI/applicant organisation within three working days of its adoption.
The HEI/organisation may lodge an appeal against the result of the external evaluation carried out by ARACIS. Procedural flaws, deviations from the rules of ethics and professional conduct of the members of the expert evaluation committee, as well as the grade awarded following the external evaluation, can be challenged in accordance with the procedures for handling complaints and appeals submitted by educational institutions, published on the ARACIS website.

The *EEP report* validated by the ARACIS Board, accompanied by the *Summary Presentation of the Results of the External Evaluation* (Annex 3), and the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in a study year of the bachelor's degree programme evaluated, are made public by posting on the ARACIS website. ARACIS also communicates to the HEI/organisation the Monitoring Plan for the assessed BDP.

Stage 13. The **decision of the ARACIS Board** is communicated to the MoE within 90 days of the end of the external evaluation visit.

On the basis of the opinion issued by ARACIS, the Ministry of Education, depending on the case, grants or withdraws the right to operate the bachelor's degree programme evaluated.

Stage 14. **Follow-up process**

The purpose of the follow-up process is to track/observe the progress of the evaluated HEIs in implementing the recommendations proposed by ARACIS as a result of the external evaluation process.

In the event of a favourable decision by the ARACIS Board, the HEI will submit a *progress report* on the status of implementation of the recommendations for the assessed BDP within a maximum of two years from the date of the external evaluation. This report will be analysed by a *monitoring committee* of the ARACIS *Permanent Specialist Expert Commission*, which will assess the degree of fulfilment of the recommendations and draw conclusions, highlighting the measures to be further implemented, if any, and the deadline for submitting a new progress report.

If the progress report is inconclusive, the monitoring committee may ask the HEI for clarification or may conduct a 1-2 day monitoring visit, the meeting allowing the institution and ARACIS to discuss progress and obstacles encountered during the implementation of the Monitoring Plan. The costs related to these activities are determined by ARACIS.

Following the analysis of the progress report and the monitoring visit, the monitoring committee will prepare a written response to the evaluated HEI, after approval by the ARACIS Board.

6 ANNEXES

6.1 Annex 1. Areas, Criteria, Standards and Performance Indicators for the external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes

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 indicators
Area A. Institutional capacity
Criterion A.1. Institutional, administrative and managerial structures
S.A.1.2. Stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of the HIA/organisation strategy
IP.A.1.2.1. 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.1.2.2. 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.
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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.A.1.6.5. The HEI/organisation ensures compliance with ethical rules in research.
IP.A.1.6.6. 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.1.6.7. 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.
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 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.2.1.4. 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.2.1.5. 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. 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.2.1.7. The study programmes benefit from e-learning platforms where course materials and other teaching materials are posted.
IP.A.2.1.8. The HEI/organisation provides material support to students for participation in research programmes, scientific events, student competitions, publication editing, cultural events, etc.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.A.2.1.9. 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.
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 appropriate to the requirements of their functions
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. The higher education institution shall ensure that the teaching staff, both in terms of numbers and training/education, covers the activities foreseen for the subjects in the curriculum for the entire cycle of the study programme.
IP.A.3.1.4. At least 70% of the total number of jobs in the study programme are filled by tenured teachers in the higher education institution, according to legal provisions - either full-time or reserved jobs, and of these at least 25% are filled by university professors and university lecturers.
IP.A.3.1.5. The holders of the subjects have the scientific title of doctor and meet at least one of the following conditions: they have a bachelor's degree in the field of the subjects taught; they are doctoral supervisors in the field of the subjects taught; they have a doctoral thesis in the field of the subjects taught. The other teachers must have initial training and competence in the subject area taught.
IP.A.3.1.6. The subject holders have developed lectures and other work necessary for the teaching process, which fully cover the subject matter of the respective subject, corresponding to the subject sheet.
IP.A.3.1.7. 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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
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. The name of each bachelor/master degree programme is closely related to one or more occupations listed in the Romanian Classification of Occupations (COR) or ISCO-08 and their related occupational standards.
IP.B.1.2.3. The curriculum is so designed that the stated learning outcomes for all subjects, taken together, ensure the achievement of the final learning outcomes for the whole programme of study.
IP.B.1.2.4. 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.1.2.5. The implementation of study programmes is done at university level through cooperation between faculties.
IP.B.1.2.6. HEI has procedures that allow for student mobility within the university, based on the transferable credit system.
IP.B.1.2.7. 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.B.1.2.8. A study programme comprises: general and specific objectives; expected learning outcomes; the curriculum with subject weights expressed in ECTS credits and with subjects sequentially ordered over the period of study, flexible learning pathways; subject descriptions, including examination and assessment procedures for each subject, taking into account the expected learning outcomes; the forms of the final examination, as a summative examination certifying the assimilation of the cognitive and professional skills corresponding to the university qualification.
IP.B.1.2.9. The curriculum comprises core, subject, specialist and complementary subjects, grouped in turn into compulsory, optional and elective subjects, in accordance with the normative requirements established at national level and the specific ARACIS standards. The curriculum is structured in such a way as to allow graduation within the time normally allocated to the programme's study cycle.
IP.B.1.2.10. The ratio between the hours of lectures and those of applied didactic activities - seminars, laboratories, projects, internships, etc., must be in accordance with the specific standards of the bachelor's fields / study programmes, developed by ARACIS. At least 50% of the forms of verification of the study subjects set out in the curriculum are examinations.
IP.B.1.2.11. The subjects in the curriculum have subject sheets which specify the objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the basic thematic content, the distribution of the number of hours of lectures, seminars and other applied activities per subject, the minimum bibliography, the examination and assessment methods taking into account the planned learning outcomes.
IP.B.1.2.12. The subject sheets reflect the student-centredness of the teaching-learning-assessment process, including the provision of specific individual study activities (homework, individual or team projects, etc.) and their inclusion in the assessment process.
IP.B.1.2.13. Study programmes are designed to facilitate national and international student mobility and recognition of ECTS credits.
IP.B.1.2.14. Degree programmes are designed so that graduates benefit from learning outcomes to the highest degree, including the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge.
IP.B.1.2.15. The curricula include, where appropriate, themes leading to the acquisition of transversal competences, such as the affirmation of the student's personality in society, communication, foreign languages, teamwork, training students in the spirit of European values, addressing issues related to the sustainable development of society, the promotion of democracy, intercultural dialogue, respect for the law, responsibility in the exercise of the profession, etc., which can influence their personal development and be applied in their future careers.
IP.B.1.2.16. 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.B.1.2.17. 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.1.2.18. The study programmes are uniform in structure, regardless of the form of education (full-time, part-time or distance learning), but differ in their implementation according to the means used to ensure students' progress during their studies.
IP.B.1.2.19. 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.1.2.20. 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).
S.B.1.3. Ability to run study programmes efficiently in terms of human resources and learning environment
IP.B.1.3.1. Teaching staff set teaching, learning and assessment objectives for each subject/programme of study and these are communicated to students and stakeholders.
IP.B.1.3.2. 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.1.3.3. The subject sheets clearly present specific and general competences, learning outcomes, ensuring the correlation of the university study programme with the National Qualifications Framework, as recorded in the National Register of Higher Education Qualifications (NRQHE).
IP.B.1.3.4. HEI ensures the quality of exchange programmes and international mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff and promotes mobility at all levels.
S.B.1.4. Relevance of university degree programmes
IP.B.1.4.1. 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.1.4.2. Study programmes are designed and regularly reviewed on the basis of peer reviews with students, alumni and employer representatives, and benefit from external expertise.
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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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 use the resources of new ICT technologies, which facilitate a permanent dialogue with students, as well as auxiliary materials, which allow the creation of a supportive teaching/learning environment oriented to the students' needs. Teachers flexibly use a variety of pedagogical methods and educational technologies to encourage debate, exchange of views and teamwork.
IP.B.2.1.3. The teaching and learning process involves both direct teaching activities and individual study.
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.2.1.5. 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. The diversity and relevance of assessment forms allow students to demonstrate the extent to which the expected learning outcomes have been achieved. For each subject the evaluations are in line with the expected learning outcomes.
IP.B.2.1.7. Learning outcomes are subject to a continuous process of updating to labour market requirements and monitoring their relevance.
IP.B.2.1.8. The students' level of prior learning is taken into account when designing study materials. They facilitate individual study and enable the development of collaborative learning and project-solving techniques. The study materials provide a high level of interactivity and promote critical thinking.
IP.B.2.1.9. 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.2.1.10. 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.B.2.1.11. Teachers have office hours available to students and customise tutoring at the student's request. There are tutors or year tutors or other forms of association between a teacher and a group of students.
IP.B.2.1.12. An additional number of credits may be allocated to students' extra-curricular activities, provided that there is a mechanism in place for the academic assessment and recognition of acquired skills and abilities.
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.
S.B.2.3. Valorisation through employability
IP.B.2.3.1. At least 50% of graduates are employed within two years of graduation at the level of university qualification obtained.
IP.B.2.3.2. More than 50% of graduates rate the learning environment offered by the university positively in relation to labour market requirements.
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.
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. 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.
IP.B.3.1.3. 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.B.3.1.4. 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 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.
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 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.
Area C. Quality Management
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. Diplomas are issued in accordance with the requirements of the university qualification, based on expected learning outcomes.
IP.C.2.1.2. Graduates receive a free Diploma Supplement containing all the information required by the regulations in force.
IP.C.2.1.3. At the level of the faculty/department coordinating the study programme there is a committee for quality assessment and assurance, which ensures the conduct of activities and the application of quality assessment and assurance procedures.
IP.C.2.1.4. University degree programmes are regularly evaluated on the following aspects: identified labour market needs and objectives, teaching-learning-assessment processes, material and human resources, concordance between stated learning outcomes and their assessment methods, results on progress and success rate of graduates, employability rate of graduates in the field of study, existence of a quality management system to ensure continuity and relevance.
IP.C.2.1.5. The HEI shall draw up an annual report on the implementation of the internal quality assurance programme and make it public.
Criterion C.3. Objective and transparent procedures for assessing learning outcomes

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
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.3.1.5. 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 qualifications and competences of the teaching staff correspond to the academic requirements of the study programmes.
IP.C.4.1.2. 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.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.
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

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.C.4.2.1. Peer review is organised annually and is based on clear and public procedures.
IP.C.4.2.2. 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.
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.
IP.C.5.1.9. The HEI/organisation ensures that students receive adequate support from teachers (mentoring and tutoring activities, etc.) to progress in their learning.
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

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
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. Centraliser of indicators on the organisation of the bachelor's education process

Name of bachelor's degree programme .....

No.	Indicator	Description
1.	Length of school enrolment (expressed in number of years)	
2.	Total number of compulsory credits (ECTS)	
3.	Duration of a semester of teaching activity*) (no. weeks)	
4.	Minimum number of hours of fully assisted teaching activity per week	
5.	Number of teaching activities in the curriculum for the whole cycle of studies (no. hours)	
6.	Number of subjects (excluding practical) in a semester (min./max.)	
7.	Number of credits allocated to a subject (min./max.)	

8.	Duration of professional practice (no. hours)	
9.	Duration of the practice for the preparation of the bachelor thesis/diploma project (no. hours)	
10.	Number of credits allocated to the bachelor thesis/diploma project	
11.	Ratio of total hours for applications to total hours for course (%)	
12.	Share of number of examinations in total number of final evaluations (%)	
13.	Number of weeks for semester exam sessions	
14.	Number of weeks for the overdue session	
*) Including for internships and the preparation of the bachelor thesis/diploma project		

6.3 Annex 3. Summary presentation of the results of the external evaluation of the bachelor's programme

Name of bachelor's degree programme .....

No.	Characteristics	Remarks
1.	Higher education institution/organisation (name in Romanian and English)	
2.	Bachelor's field of study	
3.	Bachelor's degree programme (name in Romanian and in the teaching language, where applicable)	
4.	Objective of the external evaluation (Provisional Operating Licence/Accreditation/Regular Evaluation)	
5.	Number of students enrolled in the bachelor's degree programme	
6.	Number of teaching staff teaching in the bachelor's programme, of which tenured in the HEI/applicant organisation	
7.	Number of teaching staff teaching on bachelor's and master's degree programmes in the BDP field assessed, of which tenured in the applicant HEI/organisation	
8.	Maximum number of students that can be enrolled in a year of study	
9.	Diploma issued	
10.	Qualification level according to CNC	
11.	Length of school enrolment (expressed in number of years)	
12.	Total number of ECTS credits	
13.	Short description of the qualification	
14.	Notification: Provisional operating authorisation/Accreditation/Maintaining accreditation/Non-provisional operating authorisation/Non-accreditation/Revoking accreditation	

No.	Characteristics	Remarks
15.	Positive aspects	
16.	Negative aspects	
17	Performance indicators not met	
18	Performance indicators partially met	
19	Recommendations	
20	Composition of the Expert Evaluators Panel	
21	Period of the external evaluation visit	

6.4 Annex 4. Deadlines and activities for external evaluation of bachelor's degree programmes

No.	Stage	Deadline	Cumulative term (day)
1.	The HEI/organisation submits to ARACIS the application requesting the external evaluation of an bachelor's degree programme (BDP)		-
2.	ARACIS assesses the eligibility of the application and concludes the external evaluation contract with the applicant HEI/organisation.	15 days after submission of the application for external evaluation	15
3.	The HEI/organisation submits to ARACIS the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) of the BDP under evaluation.		
4.	ARACIS Accreditation Department appoints Expert Evaluation Commission (*EEP*)	30 days after filing the EIR	45
5.	The Expert Evaluation Panel reviews the EIR and may request additional information to be added to it	15 days after the appointment of the EEP	60
6.	The HEI/organisation provides the requested information	15 days after receipt of the EEP request for completion of the IER	75
7.	The panel of expert evaluators carries out the evaluation visit to the applicant HEI/organisation	30 days after receipt of the requested information	105
8.	The panel of expert evaluators finalises the EEP Report and Summary Presentation. Forwarding of the EEP Report to the applicant HEI/organisation.	10 days after the end of the external evaluation visit	115

No.	Stage	Deadline	Cumulative term (day)
9.	The HEI/organisation sends the ARACIS the response letter related to the EEP Report.	10 days after receipt of the EEP Report	**125**
10.	Analysis of the EEP Report and its completion by the Committee of Permanent Experts on Specialised Experts.	25 days after receipt of the EEP Report at ARACIS	**150**
11.	ARACIS Accreditation Department reviews the response of the HEI/organisation and validates the EEP Report, proposes a follow-up plan	20 days from receipt of response from the HEI/organisation	**170**
12.	ARACIS Board opinion	25 days after validation of the EEP Report in the Accreditation Department	**195**
The decision of the ARACIS Board is published and the opinion is communicated to the ME. The EEP report validated by the ARACIS Board is published on the ARACIS website. The deadline for completion of the external evaluation process of a BDP is a maximum of six months from the date of signature of the external evaluation contract.			



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