UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ

Programul Operațional Capacitate Administrativă
Competența face diferența!

Instrumente Structurale 2014-2020

QAFIN

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

PART IV

Beneficiary: MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII

Partner: ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Project co-funded by the European Social Fund through 2014-2020 Administrative Capacity Operational Programme!

www.poca.ro

Competence makes the difference! Project selected under the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme co-financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund
Priority Axis 1: Efficient Public Administration and Judiciary
Project Title: "Improving Public Policy in Higher Education and Increasing the Quality of Regulation by Updating QAFIN Quality Standards"
Code SIPOCA/SMIS2014+: 16

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

PART IV

GUIDELINES ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF MASTER'S DEGREE FIELDS OF STUDIES

Coordinator
Iordan PETRESCU

Experts:
Alexandru CHIȘ
Radu Mircea DAMIAN
Mircea NEAGOE
Ștefan STANCIU

Material produced in collaboration with World Bank experts within the project.

BUCHAREST, 2020

Editor:

Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Make-up: Emilia Gogu

Publication date:

October 2020

The contents of this material do not necessarily represent
the official position of the European Union or the Romanian Government

The paper **METHODOLOGY AND GUIDELINES ON EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA (PRINTED EDITION, 2020)** has been registered under the code **ISBN 978-973-0-32888-2.**

Reproduction in whole or in part of this document is only permitted
with the written consent of ARACIS.

The methodology is available at www.aracis.ro,
in the section dedicated to the presentation of the project results
https://www.aracis.ro/rezultatele-proiectului-qafin/

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1 FOREWORD 6
1.1 Legislative framework for Master's degree studies 6
1.2 Objectives of the Guidelines 6
2 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF MASTERS COURSES 7
2.1 The mission of the Master's degree programme 8
2.2 The teaching, learning and assessment process 8
2.3 Human, material and financial resources 9
2.4 Admission, transfer, mobility, student academic progress and degree completion 10
2.5 Internal quality assurance 10
3 DEGREE OF COMPLIANCE WITH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND INDICATORS,ASSESSMENT AND FULFILMENT OF ACCREDITATION/MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME 10
4 OBJECTIVES OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION 11
4.1 Accreditation of new Master's degree fields 12
4.2 Inclusion of new Masters degree programmes in accredited Masters fields 14
4.3 Periodic evaluation of Master's degree courses 15
5 METHODOLOGICAL STEPS FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF MASTER'S DEGREE COURSES 17
6 ANNEXES 23
6.1 Annex 1.Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators for the external evaluation of Master's degree courses 23
6.2 Annex 2. Centraliser of indicators on the organisation of the educational process at the level of each Master's degree programme 35
6.3 Annex 3. Summary presentation of the results of the external evaluation 36
6.4 ANNEX 4 Centraliser table. Deadlines and activities for the external evaluation of Masters Courses 36

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 Master's degree studies

The process of external evaluation of Master's degree courses 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 Law no. 1/2011 as amended and supplemented, the accreditation, i.e. the periodic external evaluation of a field of master's degree studies in an accredited HEI, together with the establishment of the maximum number of students who may be enrolled in a year of study and who may be awarded a graduation diploma, is carried out 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

The external evaluation guide for the Master's degree courses complies with the provisions of the Romanian Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 on the quality assurance of education, approved with amendments and additions by Law no. 87/2006, as amended and supplemented.

Master's degree programmes (MScP) are the second cycle of university studies and are completed through level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) according to ISCED 2013. They last 1-2 years, as appropriate, and correspond to a minimum number of transferable ECTS credits of between 60 and 120.

An accredited Master's degree programme operates legally if it has at least one Master's degree programme accredited following an external evaluation.

Master's degree programmes can be:

a) *professional master's degree programmes*, mainly oriented towards training and deepening professional skills in the field of bachelor's studies

or in a related/related field of university studies, as well as complementary training for bachelor's graduates of other fields of university studies;

b) m*aster's research programmes*, mainly oriented towards the training of scientific research skills, which constitute a preparatory basis for doctoral studies.

c) *master's degrees in teaching*, mainly oriented towards the training of teaching skills.

The diploma awarded after graduation from a MScP, following completion of the degree programme and successful completion of the dissertation, attests that the holders have obtained the skills, knowledge and abilities specific to one or more occupations/qualifications corresponding to the CNC 7 qualification level.

The grouping of some MScP into a Master's degree programme (MScF) allows for a multidisciplinary design and approach to teaching, learning and research activities by pooling the material and human resources available to universities, faculties and departments, thus providing students with a flexible educational and research pathway with multiple options.

Master's degree programmes can be organised in the following forms of education: full-time and part-time, except those regulated at European Union level.

The master's degree in teaching and the master of research degree can only be organised on a full-time basis.

A Master's degree programme may be conducted in Romanian, in the languages of national minorities, as well as in one or a maximum of two foreign languages of international circulation.

2 Specific requirements for the external evaluation of Masters Courses

Accredited Master's degree programmes that are part of an accredited MScF are organised and structured in such a way as to comply with the legal requirements, taking into account the assessment of the MScF:

a) to achieve the mission and objectives of the Master's degree programme;
b) to achieve a teaching, learning and assessment process centred on students' needs and to provide appropriate support services to enable students to achieve their stated outcomes, including the development of transversal competences;
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 The mission of the Master's degree programme

The mission and objectives of the degree programmes in the subject area subject to external evaluation must reflect the requirements of the socio-economic and cultural environment, employers, other labour market actors and have common elements justifying the inclusion in a common subject area.

The common objectives of the degree programmes that are part of the evaluated Master's degree field should take into account: consistency with the university's mission, employment opportunities for graduates in the labour market, potential further developments in the field of study, opportunities for further study through doctoral or postgraduate programmes by graduates and student interests.

The name of the Master's degree programmes must be in line with the intended qualifications.

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 them to achieve the stated learning outcomes within the timeframe set out in the curriculum plans. Teaching and learning methods must be based on theoretical models and strategies specific to adult psycho-pedagogy and may include teaching activities such as lectures, seminars, laboratory activities, tutoring, individual study, projects, case studies, research internships, practicums, etc. The teaching-learning process must be flexible enough to factor in the different learning capacity of students, thus facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills and reducing the dropout rate.

The curricula presented on the institution's website for all Master's programmes in the field must be accurately written and contain relevant information on how the stated learning outcomes are intended to be achieved. It must 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 scientific research and dissertation activities.

The subject files of the university study programmes contain information on: position and type of subject in the curriculum, subject content, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, credit allocation, forms of assessment, prerequisites for access or other specific requirements of the university study programmes, etc.

Forms of assessment of learning outcomes may include: oral examination, written examination, portfolio submissions, submission of reports on practical activities, essays, oral presentations, research reports, posters, artwork, etc. The forms of assessment chosen enable students to meet the stated learning objectives of the degree programme.

IOMSc will pursue work related to the design, delivery, assessment and updating of the content of the MScP 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 Master's degree programmes in the evaluated Master's degree field must be sufficient to ensure quality teaching and research processes in line with the profile of the evaluated Master's degree field.

Laboratories, computer rooms and workshops, etc. must be equipped with specific equipment necessary for the practical activities required by the university degree programmes in the evaluated field. The organisation of activities with these facilities must ensure safe access for students and the possibility to effectively carry out practical activities, especially those contributing to projects, practical work, research and research reports, art work, sports or musical activities, etc.

The educational infrastructure must be modern and adaptable to different contexts and teaching/learning methods (rooms with desks and mobile chairs, open space rooms, etc.). HEI will also aim to constantly update the existing facilities in laboratories, classrooms, seminar rooms, library, etc. in line with the needs and interests of students.

The ratio between the number of students and teaching staff must ensure the quality of teaching and learning and be in accordance with the specifications of the specific standards of the field of study.

Teaching staff must have training and experience appropriate to the subjects taught.

The higher education institution must have a continuous professional training plan that allows teachers to update their specialist, psycho-pedagogical knowledge and their knowledge of the use of new educational technologies and to provide them with the skills to adapt to the needs of new generations of students.

Support services for students, including but not limited to tutoring, library access, information and documentation facilities, access to national and/or international databases, support in identifying internships, etc., should be easily accessible.

The higher education institution has an appropriately sized budget, which ensures the delivery of the degree programmes in the field assessed according to quality standards. The financial resources approved and allocated to each area of master's studies are sized to ensure that any variation between planned and actual financial performance will not compromise academic standards and student interests.

2.4 Admission, transfer, mobility, student academic progress and degree completion

The conditions for admission, transfer, mobility and student progression and completion of studies must be specified in the tuition/study contracts and made public, and the results of these processes must be monitored by the institution organising the Master's degree (IOMSc).

The HEI must ensure that students are informed about the conditions of admission and the existence of regulations concerning their academic pathway and their rights and obligations, the subjects in the curriculum, the services provided by the university, the 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 grants and other funding, mobility, etc.

Student record books provide essential information on student activity. HEI has an internal regulation on monitoring student progress, and the data collected and analysed is used to review and update university curricula.

2.5 Internal quality assurance

Internal quality assurance procedures are in place at MScF level and are in line with the quality assurance policy of the HEI organising the respective Master's programme area.

The MScF Master's degree programmes under evaluation must be supported by their own effective quality assurance policies and procedures.

A clear procedure is applied at MScF level for reviewing the Master's degree programmes at regular intervals or whenever the socio-economic environment requires it, involving students, graduates and employer representatives.

At MScF level, a procedure is in place and there is a tool for collecting feedback from students, for all subjects in the curriculum, to enable effective evaluation of the performance of all teachers teaching those subjects. IOMSc also envisages a strategy for monitoring the work of graduates and concrete mechanisms to collect regular data and feedback from them.

Information on quality assurance is published on the website of the faculties organising the respective degree programmes.

3 Degree of compliance with performance standards and indicators,assessment and fulfilment of accreditation/maintenance of accreditation criteria for the Master's degree programme

Grades for meeting the performance indicators set out in Annex 1 are awarded as follows, as appropriate:

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) ***Unfulfilled*** - awarded if the performance indicator is not met and cannot be met within one year.

Decisions on external evaluation opinions take into account the level of compliance with the criteria, standards and performance indicators used for the evaluation.

A Master's degree field of study shall gain accreditation or maintain accreditation if it meets the criteria, standards and performance indicators specified in Annex 1.

On the basis of the results of the external evaluation carried out for the accreditation/periodic evaluation of a Master's degree field, ARACIS grants the following opinions, as appropriate:

Accreditation/maintenance of the accreditation of the master's degree field for a period of five years, with the maximum number of students that may be enrolled in a year of study in the master's degree field in question, if the quality standards are found to be met.

With the accreditation of a Master's degree programme, all Master's degree programmes in the field are accredited.

Non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation of the evaluated Master's degree programme if the quality standards are not met. In this situation, the HEI requests a new external evaluation by ARACIS within one year, after the problems reported in the external evaluation have been solved. Otherwise, the ARACIS report remains final. The costs of the additional evaluation are borne by the HEI. Non-accreditation of one field of Master's studies leads to non-accreditation of all Master's degree programmes in the field.

Master's degree fields for which the quality standards are found not to have been met in two successive accreditation evaluations can no longer be proposed by the HEI for external evaluation.

4 Objectives of the external evaluation

The objectives of the external evaluation are:

a) *accreditation* of new areas of Master's degree studies;
b) *inclusion of new Masters degree programmes* in accredited Masters fields;
c) *periodic evaluation* of accredited master's degree courses.

4.1 Accreditation of new Master's degree fields

New fields of study for a master's degree in an accredited HEI are subject to accreditation directly, without going through the provisional operating authorisation procedure.

An area of master's degree study may be externally assessed for accreditation if the HEI organises at least one master's degree programme in that area.

Accredited higher education institutions wishing to organise Masters degree programmes in a new field of Masters degree studies must obtain accreditation for that field.

Following the external evaluation and accreditation of the Master's degree programme, the Master's degree programmes are considered accredited for the higher education institution.

The newly established Master's degree programme is accredited on the basis of meeting the standards and performance indicators of the programme (Annex 1).

Integrated Master's degree programmes promoted by a Romanian higher education institution or in which it participates on the basis of partnership contracts signed with foreign higher education institutions will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation procedure contained in the Guide on Accreditation and Periodic Evaluation of Integrated Degree Programmes.

In summary form, the external evaluation process for the accreditation of Master's programmes and related programmes is as follows:

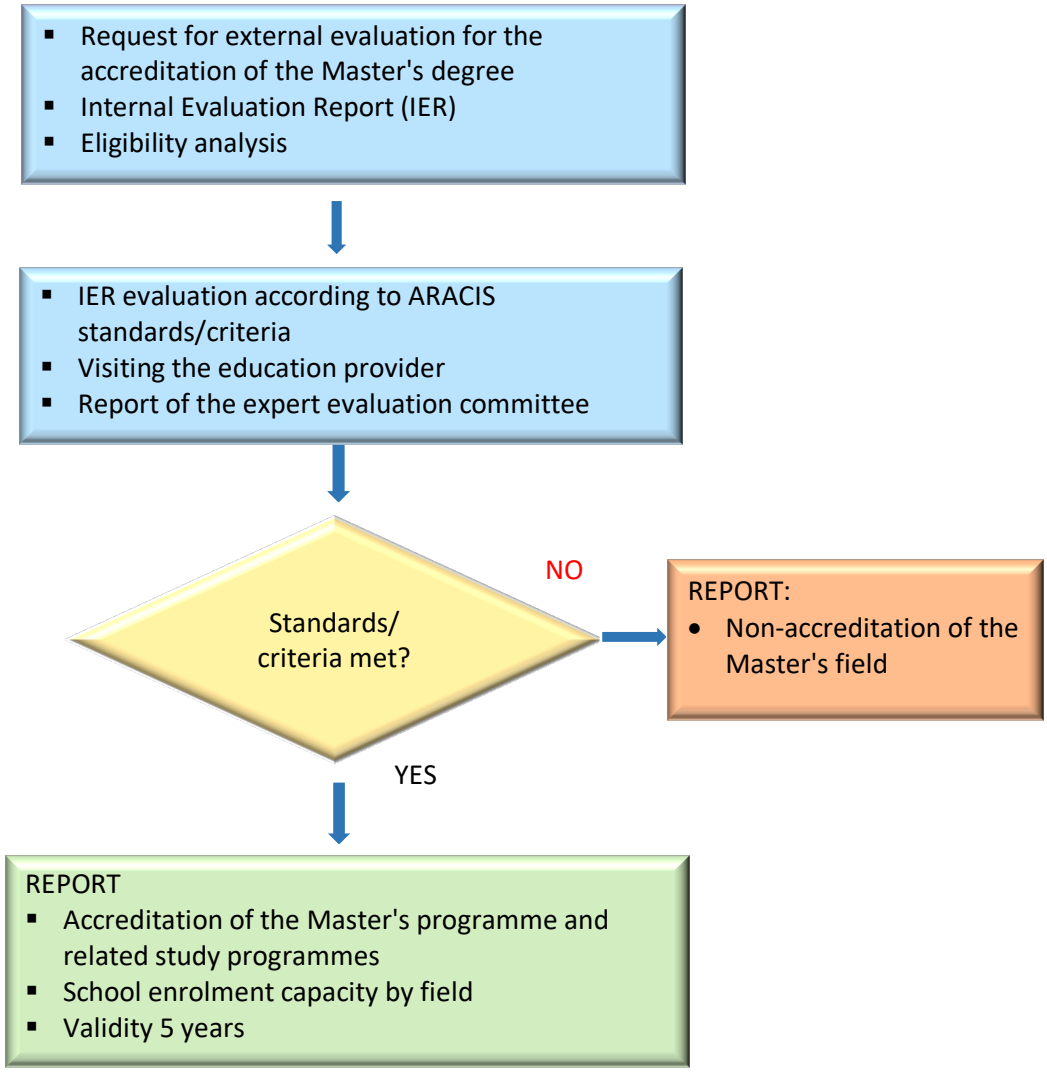


Figure No. 1 Accreditation of Master's field/ Master's study programmes

On the basis of the results of the external evaluation for the accreditation of a master's degree field, ARACIS proposes to the Ministry of Education, where appropriate:

Accreditation of the Master's degree programme for a period of five years and the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in the Master's degree programme if the quality standards and performance indicators are found to be met;

Non-accreditation of the evaluated Master's degree programme if quality standards and performance indicators are not met. If none of the Master's degree

programmes included in the field assessed meets the standards and performance indicators set out in Annex 1, the Master's degree programme is not accredited and the HEI does not receive tuition capacity.

In order to start the external evaluation procedure for the accreditation of a new master's degree field, the higher education institution submits to ARACIS an application accompanied by the NAQ opinion for the validation of the qualification related to the study programmes.

The accreditation procedure for a master's degree programme is finalised by ARACIS within six months from the date of registration of the application for evaluation.

The methodological steps for the external evaluation of Master's degree courses for accreditation are presented in Chapter 5.

4.2 Inclusion of new Masters degree programmes in accredited Masters fields

Within an accredited Master's degree programme, in the period between two external evaluations, the promotion of a new Master's degree programme shall be approved by the HEI Senate and/or the Board of Governors, without changing the enrolment capacity of the Master's degree programme concerned.

A new Master's degree programme may be organised in an accredited Master's degree field, following an external evaluation, without a visit to the HEI, with the favourable opinion of ARACIS for the inclusion in the Master's degree field concerned, without changing the enrolment capacity of the Master's degree field concerned.

The HEI is directly responsible for ensuring that the new Masters degree programmes are correctly classified in the accredited Masters degree fields.

In order to start the evaluation procedure, the HEI submits to ARACIS an application, accompanied by an opinion/certificate from the NAQ for the validation of the qualification related to the Master's degree programme, and an *Internal Evaluation Report (IER) for the inclusion* of a new Master's degree programme in an accredited Master's degree programme.

The *IER for the field of study* will include:

a) the approval of the University Senate or, where appropriate, of the Board of Governors, to establish a new Master's degree programme in an accredited Master's degree field;
b) analysis of the appropriateness of setting up a new Master's degree programme in terms of correlation with labour market requirements;
c) the diploma supplement for the proposed Master's degree programme.
e) the curriculum of the Master's degree programme;

f) where the Master's degree programme provides for more than one teaching language, the teaching languages shall be explicitly specified for each subject in the curriculum;
g) the subject sheets of the curriculum presented in Romanian and in the teaching language of the subject;
h) a list of the teaching staff, accompanied by their CVs, who will cover teaching and research activities. If the Master's degree programme provides for more than one teaching language, documents attesting to the language skills for the teaching language must be submitted for each foreign language teacher;
i) where the Master's degree programme provides for more than one teaching language, the regulations for the admission of students to Cycle II, approved by the University Senate, stipulate, as a compulsory condition for participation in the admission competition, knowledge of the teaching languages.

The *IER for the field of study* developed by the HEI is reviewed by the ARACIS Commission of Permanent Specialised Experts, which corresponds to the fundamental field of science relevant to the field of master's degree in which the evaluated master's degree programme falls.

The ARACIS permanent expert committee proposes the opinion on the *classification* or, where appropriate, the *non classification of* the Master's degree programme in the field of Master's degree studies. The opinion of the Permanent Specialist Expert Committee is validated by the ARACIS Board and sent to the Ministry of Education and HEI.

Integrated Master's degree programmes promoted by a Romanian higher education institution or in which it participates on the basis of partnership contracts signed with foreign higher education institutions will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation procedure contained in the Guide on Accreditation and Periodic Evaluation of Integrated Degree Programmes.

The evaluation procedure for the registration of a new Master's degree programme in an accredited Master's degree programme shall be completed by ARACIS within a maximum of three months from the date of registration of the application for evaluation.

Increasing the tuition capacity of a Master's degree on request can only be done through external evaluation of the field.

4.3 Periodic evaluation of Master's degree courses

According to the legislation in force, each accredited Master's degree programme is periodically evaluated externally every five years in order to maintain accreditation, based on the performance of the Master's degree programmes in the field and the capacity of the HEI to support the Master's degree programmes.

The periodic external evaluation of a Master's degree programme and of the Master's degree programmes in that programme at the time of the evaluation is carried out by ARACIS.

In summary, the external evaluation process for the periodic evaluation of Masters Courses and their related programmes is as follows:

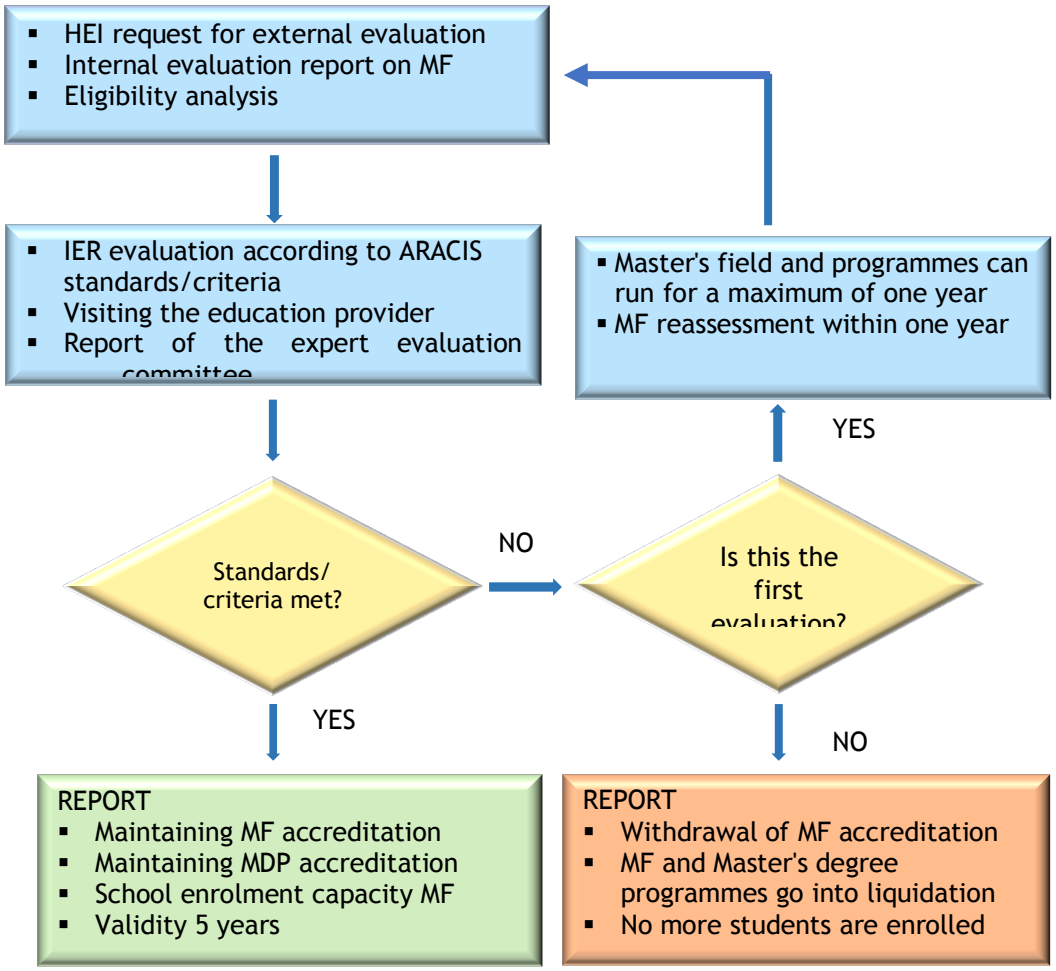


Figure No. 2 Periodic external evaluation of Masters Courses

Legend:

MF - Master's field,
IER - Internal Evaluation Report
MDP - Master's Degree Programme

Based on the results of the periodic external evaluation of a master's degree field, ARACIS proposes to the Ministry of Education, as appropriate, to:

Maintaining accreditation of the Master's degree field for a period of five years and the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in a year of study for that field if the quality standards are found to be met;

Withdrawal of accreditation for the Master's degree field if quality standards are not met. In this case, the HEI shall request within one year a new external evaluation by the agency that carried out the previous external evaluation, after the problems reported have been solved. Otherwise, the ARACIS report remains final. The costs of the additional evaluation are borne by the HEI.

Master's degree fields for which it is found that the minimum quality standards have not been met for two consecutive external evaluations are subject to liquidation, in compliance with the provisions of GEO no. 75 of 2005 on quality assurance in education.

5 Methodological steps for the external evaluation of Master's degree courses

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

Stage 1. Triggering the periodic evaluation procedure

HEI submits to the Public Relations, Registry, Archives, Secretariat Service of ARACIS (SRPRAS) a request for the initiation of the periodic evaluation procedure of the Master's degree programme. The application shall specify the field of Master's degree studies for which external evaluation is requested and shall list all Master's degree programmes in the field (in accordance with the GD in force). The representative SRPRAS informs the HEI of the amount of the evaluation fee and mentions the need to obtain the NAQ's approval for all the Master's degree programmes included in the MScF.

Stage 2. The higher education institution prepares the MScF Internal Evaluation Report (IER)

The *IER* will contain documented responses to all the requirements set out in Annex 1, correlated with the provisions of the Specific Standards for the External Assessment of the Academic Quality of Bachelor and Master Degree Programmes. The *IER* will contain data relevant to the assessed Master's degree field and all the degree programmes within it, as follows:

a) description of the mission, training and research objectives of the Master's degree programme;

b) information on the type, form of education (FTL/PTL), teaching language, geographical location of teaching activities for each Master's degree programme within the field of Master's studies evaluated;

c) the diploma supplement completed for each degree programme within the assessed master's degree programme;

d) the enrolment status of students by year of study in all MScF Master's degree programmes subject to evaluation since their accreditation or since the last evaluation;

e) the maximum number of students that the HEI wishes to enrol in the respective Master's degree programme, while respecting the enrolment capacity per Master's degree programme;

f) the curriculum for each Master's degree programme in the assessed Master's field;

g) 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, for each MScP in the targeted Master's field;

h) information on learning resources (textbooks, treatises, bibliographical references, access to databases, etc.) for each bachelor's degree programme available in libraries, resource centres, etc., in printed and/or electronic format;

i) information on the scientific research activity carried out by the HEI in the assessed Master's degree area 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 forms of exploitation, production of new products, etc.;

j) information on partnerships with universities/institutions in the country and/or abroad;

k) description of the technical and material base, teaching and research/creation spaces allocated to the field of Master's degree studies, including the material base in other geographical locations where Master's degree programmes are accredited;

l) description of the *hardware* and *software* infrastructure that ensures the implementation and management of e-learning platforms;

m) information on the teaching and research/creation staff involved in teaching, research/creation activities in the master's field, specifying the degree to which the teaching staff is involved in teaching and research activities within and outside the higher education institution;

n) information on the support services available to students enrolled in the academic studies programmes of the respective MScF;

o) the extent to which all posts in the function lists of the Master's degree programmes in the field evaluated are covered by own and associated staff;

p) the presentation of internal quality assurance procedures at the level of Master's degree programmes, showing the existence and application of quality assurance policies and their effectiveness and transparency. Evidence of the application of these procedures over the last three years, conclusions and measures to remedy the shortcomings identified will be provided.

Stage 3. Administrative activities and contract signature by HEI and ARACIS

Within 30 days of registration of the external evaluation request with ARACIS, the HEI shall submit the internal evaluation report to ARACIS together with the service contract signed by the HEI.
The external evaluation procedure starts on the date of signature of the service contract by ARACIS, which is immediately forwarded to the HEI.

Stage 4. ARACIS Accreditation Department appoints Expert Evaluators Panel (EEP)

The EEP will be composed of two or three evaluators mentioned in the RNE, experts in the field of the evaluated master's degree, an employer or a representative of the economic sector relevant to the evaluated master's degree mentioned in the ARACIS Employers' Register, and a representative of the student federations, evaluator registered in the RNE-S, who is enrolled in a master's or doctoral programme in the field of the evaluated master's degree.

Should there be part-time Master's degree programmes in the evaluated Master's degree field of study, one of the evaluators will be from the DL/PTL Commission.

ARACIS will take into account, as far as possible, a balanced gender distribution when appointing members of the expert review team.

The ARACIS Accreditation Department appoints the coordinator of the Expert Evaluation Panel from among the members of the ARACIS Permanent Commission of Specialised Experts relevant to the field of master's degree under evaluation.

After approval of the Expert Evaluation Panel, the HEI is informed of the composition of this panel. The HEI may challenge the composition of the Expert Evaluation Panel within five days, but may not propose new experts. If the HEI has contested the composition of the Commission, the BEX of the ARACIS Board examines the contestation and, after consultation with the Accreditation Department, may appoint within five days other members of the Expert Evaluation Panel, whose composition remains final.

Stage 5. Analysis of the Internal Evaluation Report

The EEP reviews the *Internal Evaluation Report* submitted by IOMSc and may request the HEI to supplement it with additional information. The deadline for

submitting additional information to ARACIS is five days after the Agency's request, as per Annex 4.

Stage 6. External evaluation visit

The Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP) carries out an evaluation visit to the HEI that requested the external evaluation to make findings on the data submitted in the IER as well as on other issues deemed relevant.

The assessment visit, which lasts 2-3 days, includes:

a) preliminary face-to-face or online meeting of the EEP with representatives of HEI/IOMSc to discuss the information to be obtained during the visit;
b) meeting with members of department/faculty/HEI management;
c) meeting with university teaching staff who carry out teaching and support activities in the Master's degree programmes in the field evaluated;
d) meeting with a representative group of students enrolled in Master's programmes in the field evaluated, including students representing student organisations;
e) meeting with employers;
f) verification of relevant aspects contained in the IER.

Stage 7. Preparation of the EEP Report

At the end of the visit, the EEP draws up its own report, which includes:
a) the findings of the IER analysis;
b) the findings of the visit;
c) recommendations for improving the quality of the study programmes and/or the whole field evaluated.

The *EEP report,* signed by the members of the committee, must contain for each Master's degree programme in the field evaluated a summary table as set out in Annex 2.

On the basis of the IER and the findings of the evaluation visit, the EEP members propose an opinion on *accreditation/maintenance of accreditation* or *non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation*, as appropriate.

Stage 8. Transmission of the EEP Report to the HEI.

The coordinator of the shall forward the report of the panel of expert evaluators to the contact person designated by the HEI for acknowledgement and correction of any material errors within 10 days of receipt.

If the HEI does not submit any views within the deadline, the Expert Evaluation Panel's report remains final.

Stage 9. Analysis of the EEP Report by the ARACIS Commission/Committees of Permanent Specialised Experts (CEPS)

The **evaluation report** drawn up by the panel of experts that visited the applicant institution, together with the response received from the HEI, shall be submitted to the relevant *standing committee(s) of experts* for review and endorsement**.**

The standing committee of experts experts shall formulate possible additions and propose, on the basis of a report signed by all its members, an opinion on the **maintenance of accreditation** or, where appropriate, the **withdrawal of accreditation** for the field of master's degree studies for which the assessment has been requested.

If the *EEP Report* contains a significant number of indicators with a rating of limited confidence and/or no confidence, the Committee of Permanent Experts may propose to monitor the field of study assessed for a period of 1-2 years, as appropriate, and this shall be mentioned in the minutes. Within this timeframe the HEI will be required to submit a Monitoring Report to ARACIS showing how it has responded to the proposals for improvement mentioned in the External Evaluation Report.

Stage 10. Transmission of the EEP Report to the ARACIS Accreditation Department

CEPS submits to the *Accreditation Department of* ARACIS *the EEP Report* including the amendments formulated above.

The ARACIS *Accreditation Department* reviews, makes any comments and validates the *EEP Report* received from CEPS and proposes to the ARACIS Board an opinion on the *accreditation/maintenance of accreditation* or *non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation*, as appropriate, as well as a monitoring plan for the HEI Master's programme.

Stage 11. ARACIS Board opinion.

The ARACIS Board, on the basis of *the EEP Report* validated in the *Accreditation Department*, decides on the opinion on: *accreditation/maintenance of* accreditation, as the case may be, respectively *non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation*, as the case may be, for the MScF and for all the MScP falling under the respective field.

Stage 12. ARACIS informs MER and HEI.

The report validated by the ARACIS Board accompanied by the *Summary of the results of the external evaluation* (Annex 3) and the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in one year of study in the field of Master's studies evaluated is published on the ARACIS website.

ARACIS also communicates to HEI the Monitoring Plan for the MScF evaluated. The decision of the ARACIS Board is communicated to the MER within one day 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 of operation of the evaluated master's degree programme.

Stage 13. Follow-up activities.

Following the recommendations formulated by ARACIS following the external evaluation process of the Master's programme, the HEI will submit to ARACIS a report on the status of their fulfilment within one or two years of the external evaluation.

The report will be considered by the *standing Committee of experts*, which will assess the extent to which the recommendations have been met and draw conclusions, highlighting any measures to be implemented further.

6 Annexes

6.1 Annex 1.Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators for the external evaluation of Master's degree courses

The 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.

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 HEI 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 encourages creativity, innovation and institutional accountability for both staff and students.
IP.A.1.2.3. The professional Master's degree programmes create the prerequisites for continuing studies in the third cycle of academic studies and continuous professional career development through postgraduate studies, and the research programmes offer opportunities for continuing studies in the doctoral cycle, through the recognition of study modules in the Master's cycle and internships at partner universities.
S.A.1.3. Community involvement, the contribution of the HEI to social, economic and cultural development at local, regional and national level, in line with its mission
IP.A.1.3.1. HEI 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. HEI has a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which upholds 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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 ensures compliance with ethical rules in research.
IP.A.1.6.7. HEI 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.
S.A.1.7. Public accountability and responsibility
IP.A.1.7.1. HEI assumes the responsibility to take all measures to ensure the quality of its educational offer in accordance with 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. HEI has adequate 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 HEI/faculty organising the Master's degree programmes provides students with electronic access to international databases specific to the Master's degree programme.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.A.2.1.8. The study programmes benefit from e-learning platforms where course materials and other teaching materials are posted.
IP.A.2.1.9. HEI materially supports students to participate in research programmes, scientific events, student competitions, publications, cultural events, etc.
IP.A.2.1.10. The administrative staff's working hours with students are posted on the HEI 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 has mechanisms in place to ensure that the recruitment, management and professional development of teaching staff is appropriate to the requirements of their roles.
IP.A.3.1.1. The staff employed is adequate to ensure that all teaching, research and administrative activities of the HEI are carried out.
IP.A.3.1.2. The teaching staff consists of university professors, university lecturers, heads of studies (university lecturers) or renowned specialists (maximum 20% of the total teaching staff involved in a programme). The auxiliary teaching staff who provide technical support in the teaching and research/artistic creation laboratories are adequately trained to carry out the practical activities set out in the curriculum.
IP.A.3.1.3. The teaching activities related to each master's degree programme shall involve at least one professor and one university lecturer, tenured in the organising university, with initial training, doctorate, habilitation, doctoral supervision and/or recognised and relevant scientific results in the branch of science in which the master's degree programme is evaluated.
IP.A.3.1.4. At least 50% of the staff providing fully-assisted teaching activities must have tenure in the institution organising the master's degree programme assessed.
IP.A.3.1.5. At least 50% of the subjects in the fully-assisted curriculum, regulated in the State of functions according to the form of education, have as their holders teachers with the title of university professor or university lecturer.
IP.A.3.1.6. The HEI applies a transparent mechanism for staff recruitment in accordance with the legal provisions. The duties and responsibilities of the staff correspond to the qualifications and requirements of the posts.
IP.A.3.1.7. 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.3.1.8. HEI 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

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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 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.
IP.B.1.1.10. The results of the student evaluation and the opinions drawn from consultations with students after the first year of study confirm the appropriateness of the admission policies.
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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
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 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.1.2.10. 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.1.2.11. Study programmes are designed to facilitate national and international student mobility and recognition of ECTS credits.
IP.B.1.2.12. Degree programmes are designed so that graduates benefit from learning outcomes to the highest degree, including the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge.
IP.B.1.2.13. 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.1.2.14. 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.1.2.15. The HEI ensures coherence of study programmes, reviews subject content to avoid duplication of subject coverage and to keep subjects up to date, and reflects the student-centredness of the teaching-learning process.
IP.B.1.2.16. The study programmes are unitary in structure, regardless of the form of education (full-time, part-time), but differ in implementation according to the means used to ensure students' progress during their studies.
IP.B.1.2.17. HEI 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.1.2.18. The HEI ensures the quality of the teaching-learning-assessment process, regardless of where it is carried out (at the institution's premises or at the premises of legally established university extensions).
IP.B.1.2.19. The content of the Master's research degree programmes forms an effective basis for doctoral studies in the field under evaluation.
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

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
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 and each teacher, through the appropriate design of learning methods and 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
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. In the evaluation process of the internship/artistic creation/scientific research activity, the assessment of the internship tutor/scientific supervisor of the entity where the activity took place is taken into account.
IP.B.2.1.13. 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.2.3. Valorisation through employability
IP.B.2.3.1. More than 50% of graduates rate the learning environment offered by the university positively in relation to labour market requirements.
IP.B.2.3.2. The number of graduates of the evaluated Master's degree programmes in the field employed in the academic or socio-economic, cultural-artistic and sports environment in the field of study, one year after graduation, in relation to the number of non-employed students at the beginning of the Master's degree in the field is monitored by the HEI as a basis for the development of the Master's degree programme.
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. HEI 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
IP.B.3.1.3. HEI has a Code of Ethics and Academic Integrity according to which research is conducted in accordance with the rules of professional ethics in order to ensure constant vigilance against possible fraud or ethical deviations in research activities, including active measures to prevent and eliminate any form of plagiarism.
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. HEI promotes scientific research in the teaching-learning process of the degree programmes and demonstrates that the results of research activities are integrated into the educational process.
IP.B.3.2.2. HEI 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.
IP.B.3.2.4. The number of graduates of Master's degree programmes who continue their studies through PhD programmes, in relation to the number of graduates in the Master's field in the last five graduating classes, regardless of the doctoral school (own or external) is monitored by the HEI.
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 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.
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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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.
IP.B.4.1.2. The HEI/Faculty/Department provides adequate financial support for the development of the research foreseen in the curriculum of the research Master's degree programmes in the assessed Master's field.
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
S.C.3.1. Test results assessment
IP.C.3.1.1. HEI has a regulation on the assessment and grading 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.

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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 has transparent mechanisms and procedures for the regular evaluation of teaching, research, teaching assistants and administrative staff
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. HEI provides learning resources - textbooks, treatises, bibliographical references, anthologies, etc. - for each degree programme in libraries, resource centres, etc., in classical or electronic format and free of charge. In addition to electronic access, the

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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. HEI provides appropriate access to learning resources for students with special needs or disabilities.
IP.C.5.1.6. HEI 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 (DL).
IP.C.5.1.7. HEI has policies in place to support students from disadvantaged social backgrounds 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. HEI 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
IP.C.7.1.1. The HEI and all its faculties provide information and data, quantitative and qualitative, current and accurate, on qualifications, degree programmes, diplomas, teaching and research staff, student facilities and 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 journey, the extra-curricular activities and support services available, their rights and the opportunities offered by HEI.
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

Areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators
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 is required 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 educational process at the level of each Master's degree programme

	Indicator	Description
1.	Title of Master's degree programme (professional/research/teaching)	
2.	Duration of studies in Master's degree programmes (no. of semesters)	
3.	Total number of compulsory credits (ECTS)	
4.	Duration of a semester on teaching activity *) (no. weeks)	
5.	Minimum number of hours of fully assisted teaching activity per week	
6.	Number of teaching activities in the curriculum for the whole cycle of studies (no. hours)	
7.	Number of subjects (excluding practical) in a semester (min./max.)	
8.	Number of credits allocated to a subject (min./max.)	
9.	Duration of professional practice/research practice (no. hours)	
10.	Duration of practice for the dissertation (no. hours)	
11.	Number of credits allocated for the dissertation (no. hours)	
12.	Ratio of number of hours for applications to number of hours for course (%)	

	Indicator	Description
13.	Share of number of examinations in total number of final evaluations (%)	
14.	Number of weeks for semester exam sessions	
15.	Number of weeks for the overdue session	
*) *Including for practical work placements and dissertation writing*		

6.3 Annex 3. Summary presentation of the results of the external evaluation

No.	Name/Indicators	Remarks
1.	Higher education institution (name in Romanian and English)	
2.	Field of Master's studies evaluated (name in Romanian and English)	
3.	List of Master's degree programmes in the field (name in Romanian and English)	
4.	Number of students enrolled in Master's degree programmes in the field	
5.	Number of teaching staff teaching on Master's degree programmes in the field, of which tenured staff	
6.	Diploma issued	
7.	Qualification level according to CNC	
8.	Common objectives of the Master's degree programmes in the field	
9.	Score: Maintenance of accreditation / non-accreditation (in Romanian and English)	
10.	Approved for accreditation by ARACIS on	
11.	List of members of the ARACIS Expert Evaluators Panel	
12.	Period of the evaluation visit	

6.4 ANNEX 4 Centraliser table. Deadlines and activities for the external evaluation of Masters Courses

No.	Stage	Deadline (days)	Cumulative deadlines (days)
1.	The HEI sends a request to initiate the periodic evaluation procedure for the Master's degree programme.		**0**

No.	Stage	Deadline (days)	Cumulative deadlines (days)
2.	The ARACIS representative shall inform the HEI of the amount of the evaluation fee.	3 days after receipt of the request from the HEI	**3**
3.	The HEI informs ARACIS that the IER is completed.	30 days from the start of the periodic review procedure	**33**
4.	The SRPRAS representative asks the HEI to send the NAQ opinions for all programmes included in the MScF, the service contract signed by the HEI and the IER.	2 days after receipt of the announcement from HEI that the IER is completed	**35**
	The HEI forwards the documents requested by ARACIS.	5 days after ARACIS request.	**40**
5.	Signing of the contract by ARACIS representatives. The Economic Directorate issues the fiscal invoice and the SRPRAS representative sends it to the HEI, with a deadline for payment of 5 working days after issue.	3 days after receiving the documents requested by ARACIS	**43**
6.	Once the tax invoice has been paid, the HEI sends the payment order or statement (proof of payment).	5 days from the issue of the tax invoice.	**48**
7.	The SRPRAS representative draws up the registration slips (NIR) based on the contractual documents and the SEISAAC representative registers the report received on the initiation of the periodic evaluation procedure of the MScF in the ARACIS database.	2 days after payment of the tax invoice	**50**
8.	The ARACIS Accreditation Department appoints the Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP).	10 days from the issue of the tax invoice	**60**
9.	The HEI is informed about the composition of the EEP.		**60**
	HEI disputes the composition of the EEP.	5 days after receipt of the information on the composition of the EEP	**65**
10.	The Accreditation Department shall, where appropriate, rework the composition of the EEP.	5 days from the submission of the appeal by the HEI	**70**

No.	Stage	Deadline (days)	Cumulative deadlines (days)
11.	The EEP reviews the IER and may request the HEI to supplement it with additional information.	5 days after appointment of EEP members	**75**
12.	HEI provides the information requested by the EEP.	3 days from the request of the HEI	**78**
13.	The EEP carries out an evaluation visit to the HEI.	5 days	**82**
14.	Preparation of *the EEP Report*	7 days after the visit to HEI	**89**
15.	The *EEP report* is forwarded to the HEI for acknowledgement and possible reasoned positions.	2 days after the drafting of the EEP of	**91**
16.	HEI response to the EEP Report.	3 days after ARACIS request	**94**
17.	Analysis of the EEP Report and its completion by the ARACIS *Commission/Committees of Permanent Specialised Experts* (CEPS)	5 days after the EEP Report	**99**
18.	CEPS forwards the EEP Report and its amendments to the ARACIS *Accreditation Department*.	3 days after receipt of information from the HEI.	**102**
19.	The ARACIS *Accreditation Department* reviews, comments on and validates the *EEP Report* received from CEPS and proposes to the ARACIS Board an opinion on *accreditation/maintenance of accreditation* or *non-accreditation/withdrawal of accreditation*, as appropriate, as well as a monitoring plan for the HEI Master's programme.	7 days after receipt of documentation from CEPS	**109**
20.	ARACIS Board opinion	10 days after receipt of documentation from the Accreditation Department.	119
21.	The report validated by the ARACIS Board is submitted to the MER and published on the ARACIS website.	One day after the ARACIS Board opinion was issued	**120**
The procedure for the periodic external evaluation process of a MScF shall take place within a maximum of six months from the date of registration of the request for evaluation.			



TOGETHER WE SAVE NATURE!

One of our values is caring for the environment.
The QAFIN project supports and promotes sustainable development.
Please recycle this booklet when you feel it is appropriate!

CONTACT INFORMATION

BENEFICIARY:

Ministry of Education and Research,
Management Unit of Externally-Funded Projects

Str. Spiru Haret nr. 10-12, etaj 2, sector 1, 010176, Bucharest
Telephone: 021 305 59 99
Fax: 021 305 59 89
E-mail: proiect.qafin@pmu.ro
http://proiecte.pmu.ro

PARTNER:

Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Registered in:
Strada Spiru Haret nr. 12, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
Correspondence address:
Bdul. Mărăști nr. 59, sector 1, Bucharest
Tel. 021.206.76.02
Fax 021.312.71.35
ARACIS partner website: http://www.aracis.ro/proiecte/qafin/

Project co-funded by the European Social Fund through
2014-2020 Administrative Capacity Operational Programme!

Project Title: "Improving Public Policy in Higher Education and Increasing the Quality of Regulation by Updating QAFIN Quality Standards"

Project Code: SIPOCA/SMIS2014+: 16

Beneficiary: Ministry of Education and Research

Partner: Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ARACIS

Publication Date: October 2020

The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union or the Government of Romania.

Material distributed free of charge