



AGENȚIA ROMÂNĂ DE ASIGURARE A CALITĂȚII ÎN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR
THE ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Membră cu drepturi depline în Asociația Europeană pentru Asigurarea Calității în Învățământul Superior - ENQA
Înscrisă în Registrul European pentru Asigurarea Calității în Învățământul Superior - EQAR

Strada Spiru Haret nr. 12, sector 1, București, România

Bucharest, 6 June 2016

- Via email -

Answer to: ARACIS Substantive Changes Report – Clarification Request

Dear M. Tuck,

Please find below the answers to the EQAR Clarification Request dated 18 May, 2016.

1. Regarding the first clarification requested, namely the link to "ARACIS specific procedure": the link was functional when we sent the report but it was changed afterwards due to server problems. The correct and functional link is: http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/Legislatie_-_Proceduri/2014/Proceduri_privind_acreditarea_sau_evaluarea_periodica_a_domeniilor_de_studii_universitare_de_master.pdf

(Please pay attention to "underscores" in the above link).

2. Regarding the "external evaluation for accreditation of a *new Master Study domain (A.II)*:

- the institutional responsibility for quality assurance of the provision of the university is addressed by ARACIS in all external evaluations (ESG 2.1)
- the methodology was designed as "fit-for-purpose", at the request and with participation of stakeholders: universities, which want to extend their offer with new master study domains - not having been part of their already existing master study offer – in order to meet labor market demands; employers: in the SER of the proposed master study program, which shall become the "leading master study program" of the new domain, the agency requires an "opportunity study" with regard to the labor market and the input of employers which were consulted by the university (ESG 2.2)
- as the external evaluation for accreditation of a *new Master Study domain* involves the evaluation of one master study program, as a "leading master study program" of the domain, the process is predefined, since all the information for master study program external evaluation is published on the ARACIS webpage; the process includes a SER, a site-visit, a report, which is published; follow-up is either part of the external evaluation at institutional level or part of the external periodic evaluation of the master study domain (which did not yet start) (ESG 2.3)
- students are constantly being trained, with special focus on master and doctoral students, to be included in the group of experts; the most recent



training session was organized in April 2016 for 30 students, successful trainees are to be included in the ARACIS National Experts Register_Students; the procedure for periodic external evaluation of master study domains specifies the participation of students in the expert group; ARACIS has a no-conflict-of interests mechanism which applies to all types of evaluations; inclusion of employers/professional practitioners is still to be extended by the activity of the ARACIS Commission of employers (ESG 2.4); one representative of the employers is member of ARACIS Council

- the outcomes and judgments made as a result of the external quality assurance are based on explicit and published items and criteria (2.5)
- all reports are published on the ARACIS website; ARACIS takes decisions which are published together with the report; the formal decisions are taken by the Ministry of National Education and Research by ministerial Orders or Government Decisions, to empower external evaluation judgments (ESG 2.6)
- the ARACIS policy about complaints is clearly defined, published and applied to all types of evaluations, including of master study domains, referring to ethical or procedural problems (ESG 2.7)

3. Regarding the procedure, a simplified procedure "meant to give the university more flexibility to revisit or diversify the offer of master study programs in any master study domain which was already accredited" (as per AQRACIS preliminary SCR- March 2016); the criteria can be found at the following link:<http://www.aracis.ro/procedure>, under the title "Extras Proces-verbal de încadrare program master in domeniu". The document contains all the information needed for both university, to draft the Self Evaluation Report (the "Dossier" is the document equivalent of a SER), and the ARACIS experts. The "Dossier" is evaluated by the Permanent Specialty Commission which is competent to judge upon the compatibility between the master study domain and the newly proposed master study program. For this type of external evaluation it is considered that no additional site-visit was necessary since the other master study programs in the master study domain were previously visited for accreditation and also the institutional evaluation of the university includes visiting a number of master study programs. Moreover, acceptance of a new master study program in the domain should not affect the total number of students which follow 2nd cycle university studies in the given master study domain

In all evaluations which are referred to in this clarification, the ARACIS procedures consistently follow ESG 2015 part 1 and part 3, although the transition is not yet fully finalized. For instance, as what we consider as a



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relevant example, in judging upon master study programs one important criterion is “Judgement regarding the compatibility between the curriculum, the declared mission of the master study program and the intended qualifications” (“Aprecierea comisiei privind concordanța între planul de învățământ, misiunea programului solicitat și calificările vizate” in RO – see link:<http://www.aracis.ro/procedure>, under the title “Extras Proces-verbal de incadrare program master in domeniu” item 5) (ESG 1.2) in “Raport de evaluare” (Evaluation Report).

We would like to underline that the transition to the ESG 2015 is in progress. The transition shall be completed to enable the revised Methodology and procedures to be fully operational and rolling out in 2016.

Prof.dr.ing. Iordan PETRESCU

President

ARACIS

