



Bucharest, 27 January 2016

Mr. Pdraig Walsh
President

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
Subject: ARACIS Follow-Up report

Dear Mr. Walsh,

In response to your letter dated 20 November, 2015 please find below further clarifications on how the involvement of students is progressing and on the time period envisaged to involve students in all panels, as required by the ENQA Board.

I would kindly ask you also to consider that in Chapter 2.1 of the ARACIS follow-up report, section 2.1.1, the main challenges ARACIS is facing to involve students in all external evaluations were openly described.

In the ARACIS case the large number of study programs which must be evaluated every year, in parallel with institutional evaluations, was found to be at the origin of the difficulty to the immediate full application of the new ESG 2.4 and of the recommendation of the ENQA coordinated review panel.

Presently, the involvement of students in external evaluations is progressing as follows:

1. Four student representatives are attending the meetings of the Permanent Specialty Commissions (one student/commission) for: Engineering Sciences (two commissions); Social, Political and Communications Sciences; Agricultural, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine Sciences. For the other Commissions the participation of



students is intended to be in place by May 2016, with the involvement of students unions which have students registered in the National Register of External Evaluators – Students;

2. In the external evaluation of Master Domains: the drafting of the procedure is still in progress, the participation of students in the panels is specified. Approval of the procedure is envisaged for April 2016; the evaluations of Master Domains is expected to start in the first semester of 2016;
3. Involvement of students in the panels for external evaluation of study programs requires more time and is related to intended changes in the ARACIS procedures. On major change addresses planning of the periodic evaluations of the study programs (by Law: every five years), which include site visits. To this end, a possibility to minimize the number of student evaluators needed and to reduce evaluation costs is to form “clusters” (two or more programs) of study programs from a given domain, to be evaluated by the same panel at the same university in one mission, including the site visit. Thus, one student evaluator could participate in the panel together with the other academic members. Improved co-ordination of the mission is also to be considered in the internal By-Laws of ARACIS to enhance the effectiveness of the activity of the panel during the site visit, decision-making process and drafting of the report. It is envisaged that full implementation of ESG 2.4 shall be completed by 2018 and the results presented in the ARACIS SER which should be drafted for the ENQA coordinated review.
4. Student support and training shall remain a permanent activity of the agency. We envisage engaging in an additional procedure of training for new student evaluators, namely mission-related training and briefing, which is intended to increase the number of students who participate in external evaluation missions.

Finally, please do not take as an excuse my last additional comment: as our discussions with other QA agencies in the EHEA suggests, some problems raised by the full application of ESG 2.4 are also a subject of concern for them,



**AGENȚIA ROMÂNĂ DE ASIGURARE A CALITĂȚII ÎN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR
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especially for those performing not only audits (institutional evaluations) but also study program evaluations.

Hoping the ENQA Board will find useful the clarifications above, we thank you and ENQA for the constant support given to ARACIS.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. dr. eng. Iordan Petrescu

President, ARACIS

