

## 2023 OPERATIONAL PLAN

The 2023 operational plan implements the [2022 - 2026 Strategy of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education \(ARACIS\)](#), and includes actions that will be conducted in 2023, some of which are continuing from 2022 or have not been completed in the previous years.

The operational plan was developed also taking into account:

- modifications occurred in the legal provisions regarding quality assurance and higher education;
- the duties resulting from the legal provisions;
- the recommendations made by international bodies that the Agency is approaching for external evaluations;
- the schedule of activities under the projects in which ARACIS is a coordinator or a partner;
- the human and financial resources available to ARACIS.

Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
<b>Strategic line 1. Design and carry out relevant external quality evaluation processes aligned with high professional standards</b>			
1.1.	Revise the methodologies, guides and instruments used in external evaluation processes	Revise the Methodology for External Quality Evaluation	July
		Revise the Guides for external institutional quality evaluation, evaluation of bachelor's study programmes and master's study domains	October
		Revise the Guide for external quality evaluation of institutions organising doctoral studies (IOSUD), for the procedure conducted as part of the institutional evaluation	February
		Develop new Guides for External Quality Evaluation, in line with the changes of the laws	
		Revise the format of the specific standards to enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– homogeneous determination of the schooling capacity,</li> <li>– homogenisation of the wording/indicators, and aligning them with the laws,</li> <li>– eliminating subjects and including learning outcomes.</li> </ul>	July
		Modify the structure of the external evaluation reports published on the ARACIS website after consultation with the stakeholders	July



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
1.2.	Enhance the focus on learning outcomes in the external evaluation of higher education study programmes	Define learning outcomes at fundamental domain and at bachelor/master/doctoral studies level	December (partially)
		Finalise the guide for higher education institutions (HEIs) and conduct actions and activities to support HEIs in developing higher education study programmes based on the concept of learning outcomes	March
		Develop proposals related to defining learning outcomes in the legislation	September
1.3.	Create the necessary framework for the evaluation of post-graduate study programmes, and initiate these processes	Develop a methodology for the evaluation of post-graduate study programmes and the instruments required for the external quality evaluation of these programmes	September
1.4.	Create the necessary framework for the evaluation of joint study programmes, and initiate these processes	Finalise the <i>Guide</i> for the operationalisation of the European approach for the evaluation of joint study programmes	March
1.5.	Shift the focus in external quality evaluation processes to support higher education institutions in identifying their directions for development	Carry out external quality evaluation processes in HEIs and for the study programmes/domains of the three study cycles	Permanently
		Revise the Methodology for External Quality Evaluation and the Guides for External Quality Evaluation (see also 1.1.)	
<b>Strategic line 2. Develop policies and recommendations to improve the quality of higher education</b>			
2.1.	Active involvement of ARACIS in developing innovative educational policies	Develop and submit proposals to the Ministry of Education on revising the primary quality assurance legislation	January
		Develop a proposal for amending the Ministerial Order 3928 of 21 April 2005 on quality assurance of education services in HEIs	December
		Develop standards specific to every higher education cycle in the dual higher education, in line with the Order of the Minister of Education no. 5.732/2022 on approving the Methodology for the organisation and operation of dual education	March



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
2.2.	Develop studies, reports, research in fields of interest	Organise informative sessions attended by the representatives of HEIs to disseminate the results of the thematic review regarding internal quality assurance	June
		Finalise the thematic analysis regarding the results of the external evaluation of doctoral studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the lines for improving the methodology and the guides</li> <li>- Organise workshops to disseminate the results of the analysis, which could include best practice examples</li> <li>- Identify the weaknesses and identify ways to support HEIs to improve quality (including proposals submitted to the Ministry of Education for policy regulation)</li> </ul>	August
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalise the study on the <i>Activity and impact of ARACIS on the quality of the Romanian higher education system</i></li> <li>- Finalise the Barometer on the state of higher education and quality assurance system</li> <li>- Report with recommendations and lines of action for improving the activity of HEIs and of ARACIS</li> </ul>	March  May  July
		Draw up the 2022 ARACIS Activity Report (bilingual - Romanian and English)	March
		Develop a study on the approach of academic ethics and integrity in external quality assurance processes	December (partially)
2.3.	Contribute scientific papers in domestic and international events, and publication in acknowledged journals	Draft at least one scientific paper and publish or present it in a conference	Permanently
		Participate in relevant higher education quality assurance events	Permanently
2.4.	Increase the visibility of the ARACIS Journal – Quality Assurance Review (QAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publish two issues of the journal</li> <li>- Index the journal in new databases</li> <li>- Increase the number of reviewers of the articles published in the journal</li> </ul>	Permanently



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
2.5.	Participate in calls for project proposals in quality assurance	Implement the activities under the IMINQA and START projects where ARACIS is a project partner	Permanently
		Implement the activities under the project on the <i>Academic Ethical and Integrity Conduct Supported by QAAs</i> , coordinated by ARACIS	Permanently
		Initiate action to draft a project proposal in the field of the development of learning outcomes-based higher education study programmes, within a non-competitive call	July
<b>Strategic line 3. Strengthen ARACIS's position internationally</b>			
3.1.	Active representation of ARACIS in the international structures that it is a member of, and expansion towards other relevant structures	Active involvement in the international structures that ARACIS is a member of, such as ENQA, INQAAHE, CEENQA, ECA, ENAEE and GAIN	Permanently
		Finalise the activities related to joining the EUA-CDE	March
		Analyse the opportunity to join <a href="#">The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)</a>	March
		Sign collaboration memoranda with HCERES and CTI	July
		ARACIS to organise the meeting of the CEENQA Board at the "Transilvania" University of Brasov	21 – 22 April
		ARACIS to host the next meeting of the ENAEE Label Committee, at the ARACIS headquarters	26 May
		Organise the activities related to ARACIS hosting the INQAAHE Forum at the Politechnica University of Bucharest in 2024	Permanently
3.2.	Carry out quality evaluation processes for European university alliances or for other higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area	Conduct the external quality evaluation at the UNITA university alliance	December
		Conduct institutional evaluation procedures at 5 public universities in the Republic of Moldova within the QFORTE project	July
		Conduct institutional evaluation procedures at public or private universities in the Republic of Moldova	December
		Evaluation for the awarding of EUR-ACE Label to three bachelor study programmes at Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (Ukraine)	July



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
3.3.	Carry out the self-assessment activity and enable the periodic external evaluation by ENQA	Continue the external evaluation procedure by ENQA with a view to continuing ARACIS's membership of this association and renewing the EQAR registration	November
<b>Strategic line 4. Strengthen the trust of the stakeholders in external quality evaluation processes and in the quality of the higher education system</b>			
4.1.	Diversify the public communication modalities of ARACIS and increase the Agency's presence in the public space	Finalise the revision of the ARACIS website to improve the look and the accessibility of information	March
		Permanent updating and publishing of information on the Agency's activities on the Agency's website and social accounts, including LinkedIn	Permanently
		Draw up and publish the quarterly Newsletter	4 issues
		Periodically send press releases to mass media representatives	Permanently
		Attend events that are relevant for the Agency's field of activity	Permanently
		Make a brochure and a film presenting the Agency and its activities	December
		Organise a quality assurance conference	October
4.2.	Strengthen the engagement of stakeholders in external quality evaluation processes and in the Agency's activities	Collect and analyse stakeholders' opinions on how external quality evaluation procedures are conducted	Permanently
		Organise a permanent dialogue with the members of the Consultative Commission	Permanently
		Set up working groups to involve stakeholders in revising the external evaluation methodology and guides	December
		Select the employers' representatives on the Permanent (speciality) Experts' Commissions	July
		Consult with the stakeholders on relevant topics to develop the thematic analyses	March
		Attend the meetings of the National Rectors' Council, the debates and consultations organised by the Ministry of Education or other institutions that have responsibilities related to higher education	Permanently
		Organise biannual meetings with the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP)	At least two meetings/year



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
<b>Strategic line 5. Improve the Agency's institutional capacity</b>			
5.1.	<b>Improve the internal quality assurance mechanisms at the Agency</b>	Develop an internal diagnostic document based on the opinions collected from universities/professors and students evaluators after conducting quality evaluation and quality assurance activities, and include measures aimed at improving the Agency's activity. Monitor the implementation of such measures.	November
		Phone / e-mail address available for reporting deficiencies in conducting evaluation procedures	July
		Conduct internal audit missions, according to the audit plan, and correct any deficiencies identified	Permanently
		Revise some internal quality assurance procedures	July
		Consistently implement internal quality assurance procedures	Permanently
5.2.	<b>Continuous training of the employed staff and creation of professional development opportunities for them</b>	Develop a training plan that takes into account the professional development needs of the staff and enables continuous updating of knowledge regarding national regulations or European trends in quality assurance.	March
		Conduct an English language training programme for the Agency's technical staff, at the Agency's headquarters	March
		Participate in experience exchange mobility programmes at the following agencies: CTI, HCERES - France AQUIN – Germany QQI - Ireland	February, September, December
		Welcome the representatives of HCERES and CTI (France) in an experience exchange mobility programme at ARACIS, as well as the representatives of the TKTA agency of Azerbaijan	March, November
5.3.	<b>Organise programmes for training expert evaluators</b>	Operationalise the new expert evaluator management platform and select new experts	March
		Introduce a shadowing programme for expert evaluators newly admitted into the RNE - conduct visits where they will act as observers	July



Item no.	Activity	Action	Time limit
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop and organise interactive and hands-on training programmes for expert evaluators or for representatives of HEIs, including coverage of the following topics:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Training of the new members of the Council and the Permanent (speciality) Experts' Commissions</li> <li>– Definition and evaluation of learning outcomes</li> <li>– Using the e-platforms of ARACIS</li> <li>– Institutional and programme/domain evaluation according to the revised Methodology and guides</li> <li>– Student-focused education and involving students in internal quality assurance</li> <li>– Higher education and quality assurance legislation</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Develop a system for performance evaluation of expert evaluators and training needs assessment</li> </ul>	Permanently
5.4.	Efficiently use the Agency's resources and attract additional resources to carry out the activities	Draft a proposal to revise Decision no. 1731 of 6 December 2006 on approving the tariffs for the authorising and accreditation of study programmes in higher education institutions and for the external education quality evaluations, charged by ARACIS.	At least two sessions/year
5.5.	Implement digital tools to simplify the formal aspects related to external evaluation processes and the internal activity of the Agency	Operationalise the external quality evaluation platform with a view to simplifying the procedures and reducing the workload of expert evaluators, HEIs and the technical staff of ARACIS	