

Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in  
Higher Education



**GUIDE**

on conducting external quality evaluation  
procedures for the purpose of obtaining provisional  
authorisation to operate, obtaining accreditation or  
maintaining accreditation for a master study  
domain

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## 1. Purpose

In **art. 249** para. (1) letter d), Law no. 199/2023 - the higher education law, as further amended and supplemented, hereinafter the Law, sets the responsibilities of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), among which the responsibility to “develop and publish its own internal procedures for external evaluation of the quality of education”. According to **art. 20** para. (2) of the *Methodology for external evaluation of the quality of education in higher education*, approved by Government Decision no. 962/2024, hereinafter the **Methodology**, “ARACIS approves, by decision of the ARACIS Council, the guides on the procedures for conducting the evaluation processes, the standards and performance indicators for external evaluation, established according to the provisions of paragraph (1), hereinafter referred to as the guides, which it publishes by posting on its own website.”

This *Guide on conducting external quality evaluation procedures for the purpose of obtaining provisional authorisation to operate, obtaining accreditation or maintaining accreditation for a master study domain*, hereinafter the **Guide**, materialises the provisions of Law no. 199/2023, as further amended and supplemented, and the provisions of the **Methodology**.

The Guide shall apply for:

- a) The procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate for a master study domain (DSUM), described in **art. 27, 28** para. 1 letter c), **29, 34, 35 and 36** of the **Methodology**;
- b) The procedure for accreditation of a DSUM, described in **art. 39** para. (1) letter c) and para. (4) letter b), **art. 40, 43, 44 and 45** of the **Methodology**;
- c) The procedure for the periodic external evaluation for maintaining accreditation, described in **art. 55** para. (1), letter g, and (4) of the **Methodology**.

**for all the forms of organisation of master study domains**, when the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education performs the external quality evaluation procedure.

The Guide describes the applicable regulatory framework, the steps of the procedure, the follow-up evaluation activity and the decision-making processes, and includes the following annexes:

- ✓ Annex 1 Standards and indicators for the external quality evaluation of master study domains for the purpose of obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate;
- ✓ Annex 2 Structure of the Internal Evaluation Report (IER)
- ✓ Annex 3 Request for initiation of the external evaluation procedure
- ✓ Annex 4 Recommendations for the activities conducted during the on-site visit
- ✓ Annex 5 Structure of the External Evaluation Report (EER)
- ✓ Annex 6 Structure of the Progress Report (PR)
- ✓ Annex 7 Structure of the Follow-Up Evaluation Report (FER);

According to **art. 3** para. (1) of the **Methodology**, the purpose of the external quality evaluation process is to:

- a) certify the capacity of higher education institutions and education providing institutions to meet the expectations of their beneficiaries by meeting the standards;
- b) ensure protection for the direct and indirect beneficiaries of higher education and post-graduate education, as well as the beneficiaries of permanent education by producing and disseminating systematic, coherent, credible publicly accessible information about the quality of education in higher education.

**Art. 229** para. (5) and **art. 223** para. (3) of Law no. 199/2023, as further amended and supplemented, provide that the external evaluation process shall analyse the match between the internal evaluation of the quality of education and the state of facts, through a multicriterial examination of the extent to which the programmes delivered by a higher education institution or an education provider meet the relevant standards.

## 2. Applicable regulatory framework

The legal framework for the provision of the education, research and continuous training process in higher education institutions, under the authority of the Romanian state, regulating the structure, organisation, and operation of higher education in Romania, the statute of higher education staff, and the legal framework for quality assurance is the *Law on higher education no. 199/2023*, as further amended and supplemented.

*“A higher education programme operates legally as long as it holds a provisional authorisation to operate or an accreditation, and operates according to the terms established in the authorising or accrediting act”*, in line with the provisions of art. 30 para. (3) of *Law no. 199/2023*, as further amended and supplemented; the process for granting the **provisional authorisation to operate and the accreditation shall be performed distinctly** for each form of education, each tuition language/association of two or several tuition languages in the same study programme, and each administrative-territorial unit where the education process is delivered. For education in the languages of national minorities, the authorisation / accreditation process shall be conducted distinctly for each form of education, each national minority language, and each geographic area where education is delivered, as provided in para. (4) and (5) of **art. 30** of the same law.

For master study domains organised by higher education institutions, external quality evaluation for obtaining an accreditation shall be carried out as per the provisions in **art. 231** of *Law no. 199/2023*, as further amended and supplemented, **without undergoing the procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate**.

The Senate of the university **may approve introducing new master study programmes** in the authorised or accredited master study domain, without exceeding the maximum number of students established by ARACIS, subject to conducting the internal quality assurance evaluation process. Within the process of external evaluation of master study domains, ARACIS shall analyse **how the internal quality evaluation process was conducted** for the master study programmes initiated in this way.

**The deadline for filing the request** for obtaining accreditation of higher education programmes is stipulated in **art. 237** of the Law, and is *“2 years after graduation of the first class, under sanction of the Ministry of Education seizing the provisional authorisation to operate”*, and *“Accreditation shall be maintained through a periodic evaluation performed every 5 years”*, according to **art. 232** of the same law.

In the period between two external quality evaluation procedures, the higher education institution/education provider may receive quality assurance support from ARACIS through a follow-up evaluation process.

Master study programmes shall be organised according to **art. 26** para. (1) letter c), **art. 33** para. 3, 4 and 5, and **art. 57 – 60** of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented.

Thus, according to **art. 26** of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented, master study programmes shall be organised within **cycle II**, and are part of initial training in higher education.

**Art. 58** of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented specifies the categories of master study programmes, as follows:

- a) **professional** master programme, mainly focused on training professional competences;
- b) **research** master programme, mainly focused on training scientific research competences;
- c) **teaching** master programme, part of the initial training for employment on teaching positions in pre-university education.

**Art. 33** para. (3) of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented stipulates that “master study programmes can be organised in the following forms of education: **full-time education, part-time education**”. Exceptionally, master study programmes can also be organised in **distance learning** programmes, in the domains and according to the requirements established by Government decision, according to para. (5) of the same article of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented. Master study programmes in the domains that are regulated in the European Union, as well as teaching and research master programmes can only be organised in **full-time education**.

According to **art. 57** of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented, *“Master study programmes represent cycle II of higher education studies, and are finalised with a Level 7 qualification according to the European Qualifications Framework, hereinafter EQF, and the NQF. Normally, these*

studies have a duration of 1-2 years and correspond to a minimum number of 60 to 120 transferable study credits.”

### 3. Indicators used in external quality evaluation

“Based on consultations with higher education institutions, ARACIS shall establish which external evaluation standards and performance indicators mentioned in the annex shall be used for the evaluation of higher education programmes/domains in each cycle and the evaluation of higher education programmes in continuous training and permanent education in higher education”, as stipulated in **art. 20** para. (1) of the *Methodology*.

The performance indicators used in the procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate for a DSUM, and in the accreditation procedure if the procedure of external evaluation of the quality evaluation for obtaining an accreditation is performed without undergoing the procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate, as applicable, are listed in **Annex 1** to this **Guide**. For accreditation procedures when the external evaluation of the quality of education for obtaining an accreditation is performed with undergoing the procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate, and for maintaining the accreditation of a DSUM, as applicable, the performance indicators listed in the **Annex** to the *Methodology*, **section II** shall be used. If the EI has established no master study programme as per **art. 36** and **art. 45** para. (1) of the *Methodology* in the period covered by the external evaluation process, standard S.C.3.2 and indicator I.P.C.3.2.1 shall be excluded from the external evaluation process.

### 4. Stages of the external quality evaluation procedure

#### 4.1. Drafting and submission of the Internal Evaluation Report (IER), annex to the request for initiation of the external evaluation procedure

Within their internal quality assurance processes, the higher education institution (HEI) or the education provider (EP), as applicable, hereinafter the requesting institution (RI), based on their own standards and in compliance with the standards stipulated in the *Annex to the Methodology*, shall perform a self-evaluation completed with an **internal evaluation report (IER)**. The IER shall be drafted in Romanian language, according to the structure presented in **Annex 2** of this Guide, and usually should not be longer than 50 pages (excluding the annexes). The IER shall also include the information required for estimating the maximum number of students that can be schooled, and the information required for checking compliance with the *Standards* developed by ARACIS pursuant to art. 32 para. (1) letter a) and para. (3) of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented.

As much as possible, it is recommended to limit the number of annexes and include link references in the text, linking to the documents published on the website of the RI, in line with the obligations regarding transparency of information of public interest.

The RI shall file a **request for initiation of the external quality evaluation procedure for a DSUM** (hereinafter the **request**) with ARACIS, as per the template provided in **Annex 3** to this Guide, and enclose the IER and the **certificates confirming the registration/updating of the master study programmes of the DSUM** in the National Register of Higher Education Qualifications (RNCIS)<sup>1</sup>. The RI shall appoint a **contact person** for the external quality evaluation process, and indicate such person in the **request for initiation** of the evaluation procedure; ARACIS shall provide support with the procedure through the **Quality Assurance Direction (DAC) expert** in charge with the activity of the *Permanent Speciality Commission (PSC)* responsible for the DSUM master domain in question.

In the case of the subsidiaries established as per **art. 8** para. (4) of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented, the RI shall **enclose proof of compliance with the national regulations applicable in the**

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Methodology of 20 June 2023 for registration and enlisting of higher education qualifications in the National Register of Higher Education Qualifications (RNCIS)*, approved by [Order 4.494/2023](#).

country where the study domain is organised.

The request shall be sent in digital format to [solicitari.evaluare@aracis.ro](mailto:solicitari.evaluare@aracis.ro) or filled in online. The IER and its annexes shall be uploaded in digital format on the electronic evaluation platform.

To ensure optimal implementation of the evaluation procedure, the requesting institution is recommended to file the request at least **9 months** and no more than **12 months** before the deadline for completion of the evaluation. These deadlines are established according to **art. 237** and **art. 232** of *Law no. 199/2023* as further amended and supplemented, and are detailed in Section 2 of the Guide.

The DAC expert and the representative of the *Institutional Relations and Digitalisation Service (SRII)* shall provide support with publishing the internal evaluation documents on the platform. The expert shall check the compliance of these documents with the provisions of the *Guide*. If the IER is not compliant, the expert shall ask the RI to remake or add the necessary documents within no more than **15 days** after sending the request.

Within no more than **7 days** after receiving the request, ARACIS, through the *SRII*, shall send the **external evaluation service contract** to the RI to sign it. The **external evaluation service contract**, hereinafter the **contract**, includes provisions regarding the applicable regulatory framework, the parties involved, the duration and how to modify it, the value, obligations of the parties, how to communicate, information confidentiality and personal data protection, contract termination, force majeure, appeals, petitions and disputes, as well as any other elements required for delivering the evaluation services.

#### 4.2. Establishing the membership and appointing the members of the External Evaluation Experts' Panel

Within no more than **30 days** from signing of the contract, ARACIS shall appoint an **external quality evaluation experts' panel**, hereinafter the **panel**, composed of:

- a) one expert evaluator, professor, member in the National Register of Experts (teaching staff) (RNE – CD) of ARACIS, usually a member of the PSC, who shall be the coordinator of the panel;
- b) 1-2 expert evaluators, professors members in the RNE-CD of ARACIS, who shall be panel members;
- c) one student, member in the National Register of Experts (students) (RNE – S) of ARACIS, who shall be a panel member.

The requirements for selection on the panel and the procedure for appointing panel members shall be established through a specific procedure approved by the ARACIS Council and published on the Agency's website.

The list of panel members shall be sent to the RI for information purposes; within no more than **5 days** after receiving the information letter, the RI may ask for one or several members of the panel to be replaced, in thoroughly justified situations.

#### 4.3. Analysis of the internal evaluation report and request for any clarifications/additional information

Within no more than **10 days** after appointment of the panel members, the panel members shall be granted access to the ARACIS evaluation platform, where they shall have access to the IER. The DAC expert shall support the panel members with accessing the IER.

The members of the panel shall analyse the IER and, if necessary, within no more than **20 days** after accessing the report on the evaluation platform, they may request the RI to provide clarifications or additional information about the elements mentioned in the report. The RI shall respond to such requests within no more than **10 days**.

#### 4.4. On-site visit

The RI contact person and the coordinator of the panel shall agree on the date of the on-site visit, within

no more than **60 days** after signing the **contract**. The visit shall be conducted within no more than **3.5 months** after signing the contract. The duration of the visit shall be **2-3 days**, and the agenda of the on-site visit shall be established, as a rule, at least **30 days** before the visit.

During the on-site visit, the panel shall check that the information contained in the IER is true to the reality, including by visiting the venues where the learning, teaching and research activities are performed, and have discussions with the representatives of the EI and the stakeholders in order to assess the level of fulfilment of the standards and the performance indicators. Furthermore, the panel shall have discussions with representatives of the management of the RI, the DSUM coordinator, students, alumni, professors, employers or other stakeholders.

**Annex 4** to this *Guide* includes recommendations concerning the activities to be conducted during the visit. During the on-site visit, depending on the findings, the members of the panel may request any additional meetings, if they deem that no sufficient data is available for them to substantiate their assessments regarding the level of fulfilment of the standards and performance indicators. Requests shall be made so that the RI has reasonable time to organise such additional meetings.

The coordinator of the panel shall coordinate the discussions within the on-site visit and seek to ensure balanced engagement of all participants. To this purpose, it is recommended to have no more than 10-12 persons in a meeting, and the name and position of each participant, as well as the capacity in which they attend the meeting should be communicated to the panel coordinator before the visit. The meetings shall only be attended by persons who are part of the category for which the meeting is organised, as communicated before the meeting.

One of the panel members shall draft the minute of the meetings.

The on-site visit of the panel shall end with a session in which conclusions and preliminary recommendations will be presented, without, however, referring to the degree of compliance with the standards.

During the on-site visit, the coordinator of the panel may request additional information and documents, provided that these are already in the possession of the RI given the nature of its activity, or that they can be made and sent before the end of the visit.

In exceptional, thoroughly substantiated cases, with the approval of the ARACIS Council, the on-site visit or some of the activities of the visit can be organised by use of specific electronic, IT and communication resources.

#### 4.5. Drafting of the External Evaluation Report (EER), and assessments on the level to which indicators are fulfilled

The panel shall draft the External evaluation report, hereinafter the EER, within no more than **20 days** after the end of the on-site visit. The report shall include a presentation of the state of facts, analyses and conclusions about the extent to which the indicators are fulfilled, based on the presented data and evidence, by comparison with the definition of the performance indicators, the adequate standards and, as applicable, the standards defined in **art. 18** para. (1) letter b) and c) of the *Methodology*. The EER shall be based on a review of the IER, the findings during the on-site visit, and the additional documents provided before the end of the visit.

According to **art. 63** para. (2) of the *Methodology*, the results of the evaluation for each performance indicator shall be as follows:

- a) **fulfilled**, when all the aspects included in its description have been met;
- b) **partially fulfilled**, when key aspects included in its description are failed, but can be corrected within no more than 1 year;
- c) **unfulfilled**, when all the aspects in its description are failed and there is no prospect for them to be fulfilled within no more than 1 year.

The EER also includes **recommendations** for improving the future activity of the DSUM, at least for the indicators assessed as partially fulfilled or unfulfilled. The recommendations shall consider the context in

which the DSUM is delivered, as well as any specific elements, such as elements related to the master study programmes included in the DSUM, the location, the profile of the students. It should be possible to implement the recommendations during the period before the follow-up evaluation or the periodic evaluation; the recommendations should be expressed in clear points, so that the RI can know exactly what they need to do to implement each recommendation.

The EER shall be drafted according to the template provided in **Annex 5** of this Guide, in Romanian language. The panel coordinator shall draft the EER in the ARACIS evaluation platform, with the contribution of and in collaboration with the panel members. The report should not exceed **25 pages**, annexes excluded. The schedule of the on-site visit and the list of the reviewed documents should be enclosed to the report.

#### 4.6. Consultation with the RI on the EER

Within no more than **25 days** after the on-site visit, the coordinator of the panel shall send the draft EER to the DSUM contact person for comments on any clerical errors.

The response of the RI shall be sent by the contact person to the coordinator of the panel, within no more than **10 days** after receiving the draft EER. The panel shall finalise the EER within no more than **5 days**, and if necessary, integrate the received feedback; subsequently, the panel coordinator shall inform the DAC expert that the report has been finalised and is available on the evaluation platform.

#### 4.7. Analysis in the Permanent Speciality Commission, and draft decision

The DAC expert shall grant access to the EER on the evaluation platform to the members of the PSC that oversees the master study domain in question. If required, in the case of interdisciplinary programmes, upon request of the chair of the PSC, the inspector shall send the EER to be reviewed by members of other PSC(s).

The PSC shall analyse the EER, and may ask the members of the panel to add elements to it and/or remake it, if they find that the provisions of the Methodology and/or of the Guide have not been complied with or that the report does not include sufficient data and evidence to enable a decision to be passed. The panel shall respond to such request within no more than **15 days**.

The PSC shall debate on the EER in a meeting, validate the results of the evaluation regarding the extent to which the performance indicators have been met, and pass the draft decision, as described in section 4.8, by open vote, with a majority of the votes calculated from the total number of members entitled to vote. The draft decision shall be noted in a **minute** that will include the reasoning of the proposed decision, as well as a summary of the debates of the PSC. The PSC shall finalise its analysis within no more than **30 days** after receiving the final version of the EER.

#### 4.8. Analysis by the Higher Education Study Evaluation Department and the ARACIS Council; passing of the decision

After the draft decision is passed according to section 4.7, members of the ARACIS Council shall be given access to the EER and the minute of the PSC on the evaluation platform by the DAC expert. Within no more than **15 days** after receiving the minute of the PSC, the members of the Department for Evaluation of Higher Education Studies (DESU) shall analyse the draft decision in a meeting. The summary of the debates and the opinion of the DESU regarding the draft decision shall be noted in the meeting **minute**.

The ARACIS Council shall analyse the draft decision of the PSC and the opinion of the DESU, within no more than **15 days** after receiving the report of the PSC, and validate the draft decision based on checking the compliance with the *Methodology*, through an open vote, with a majority of votes calculated from the total number of members.

The ARACIS Council may request the PSC to remake the minute if they find that the provisions of the *Methodology* have not been complied with or the draft decision is not sufficiently substantiated. Furthermore, the ARACIS Council may ask the panel members to remake the EER, if the Council finds that the provisions of the *Methodology* and/or of this Guide have not been complied with or that the report does not include sufficient data and evidence to enable the decision to be passed. The PSC and the panel shall respond to such request within no more than **15 days**.

Based on the final versions of the EER, the minute of the PSC meeting, and the minute of the DESU meeting, the ARACIS Council shall validate the panel's draft decision and pass the decision on the fulfilment or failure to fulfil the standards. The decision shall be communicated to the RI and the Ministry of Education and Research by e-mail within no more than **45 days** after it has been passed.

According to **art. 63** para. (3) of the *Methodology*, a decision on a failure to fulfil the standards shall be adopted when:

- a) a standard has not been fulfilled except for the performance indicators pertaining to the criterion stipulated in **art. 226** para. (4) **letter h)** of Law no. 199/2023, as further amended and supplemented;
- b) more than 20% of the performance indicators included in the annex are partially fulfilled;
- c) more than 10% of the performance indicators included in the annex are partially fulfilled and belong to the same evaluation domain." Furthermore, para. (4) of the same article stipulates that "For failure to fulfil the performance indicators pertaining to the criterion described in **art. 226** para. (4) **letter h)** of Law no. 199/2023 as further amended and supplemented, **art. 226** para. (3) **letter b)** or **c)** shall apply."

A standard is unfulfilled when all indicators through which that standard is described are unfulfilled. If any performance indicators have been assessed as unfulfilled, except for the situation when failure to fulfil the indicators leads to a failure to fulfil a standard, such indicators shall be taken into account when analysing whether the standards are fulfilled or unfulfilled, as provided in **art. 63** para. (3) letter b) and c) of the *Methodology*.

Thus, a decision regarding failure to fulfil the standards shall be passed when a standard is not fulfilled or in the circumstances presented in the table below:

Evaluation procedure	Total number of indicators	Number of partially fulfilled / unfulfilled performance indicators	
		Belonging to any evaluation domain	Belonging to the same evaluation domain
<b>As per the Annex to the Methodology, section II</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>more than 8</b>	<b>more than 4</b>
Provisional authorisation to operate	21	more than 5	more than 3
Accreditation/Maintaining accreditation	38 <sup>2</sup> or 39 <sup>3</sup>	more than 8	more than 4

According to **art. 13** para. (5) of the *Methodology*, should ARACIS ascertain through an EER that standards have been failed as a result of an evaluation process for accreditation or for maintaining accreditation for a study programme/domain, such finding shall be communicated to the Ministry of Education and Research within **15 days** from ascertaining such fact through the external evaluation report; in turn, the Ministry of Education and Research shall inform the applicant institution within **30 days** after receiving the communication from ARACIS.

After a DSUM has undergone an evaluation procedure for obtaining a provisional authorisation to operate, the ARACIS Council shall pass one of the following decisions, as applicable:

- a) **provisional authorisation to operate** (PA), when ascertained that the standards have been fulfilled;
- b) **no authorisation** (NA), when ascertained that the standards have not been fulfilled.

After a DSUM has undergone an evaluation procedure for accreditation, the ARACIS Council shall pass one of the following decisions, as applicable:

- a) **accreditation** (AC), when ascertained that the standards have been fulfilled;
- b) **conditional maintaining of the provisional authorisation to operate** (CMPA), when ascertained that

<sup>2</sup> If the RI has established no master study programme as per **art. 36** and **art. 45** para. (1) of the *Methodology* in the period covered by the external evaluation process.

<sup>3</sup> If the RI has established at least one master study programme as per **art. 36** and **art. 45** para. (1) of the *Methodology* in the period covered by the external evaluation process.

the standards have not been fulfilled. In this case, the RI has the obligation to apply for a new evaluation from ARACIS, **within 1 year** from receiving information from the Ministry of Education and Research, as per the provisions of art. 60 para. (3) of the *Methodology*.

- c) **no accreditation** (NAC), when ascertained that the standards have not been fulfilled, following the evaluation requested as per letter b).

After a DSUM has undergone an evaluation procedure for **maintaining accreditation**, the ARACIS Council shall pass one of the following decisions, as applicable:

- a) **maintaining accreditation** (MAC), when ascertained that the standards have been fulfilled;
- b) **conditional maintaining of accreditation** (CMAC), when ascertained that the standards have not been fulfilled. In this case, the RI has the obligation to request a new evaluation by ARACIS, **within 1 year** from receiving information from the Ministry of Education and Research, as per the provisions of art. 60 para. (3) of the *Methodology*.
- c) **withdrawal of the accreditation** (WAC), when ascertained that the standards have not been fulfilled, following the evaluation requested as per letter b).

#### 4.9. Appeals and complaints

Appeals and complaints regarding the result of the evaluation or the way in which the evaluation procedure was implemented shall be settled according to the specific procedure described at: [https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Procedura-de-solutionare-a-contestatiilor-si-sesizarilor\\_28.10.2022.pdf](https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Procedura-de-solutionare-a-contestatiilor-si-sesizarilor_28.10.2022.pdf)

#### 4.10. Publishing the EER

After the final decision has been passed by the ARACIS Council and after any appeals have been settled, if applicable, the EER and the Decision of the ARACIS Council shall be published on the ARACIS website and on the DEQAR website. The report shall include the name of the external quality evaluation experts, members of the panel.

### 5. Follow-up evaluation activities

#### 5.1. Purpose

The follow-up evaluation process seeks to support the RI in the process of assuring the quality of the activities conducted within the DSUM. Furthermore, the follow-up evaluation assesses the extent to which the recommendations given during the external evaluation procedure have been implemented by the RI, and checks that the aspects related to the performance indicators evaluated as partially fulfilled have been remedied.

#### 5.2. Drafting and sending of the progress report

Following a decision to grant a provisional authorisation to operate, an accreditation or a decision to maintain accreditation, the RI has the obligation to send ARACIS a progress report (PR), by uploading it on the electronic evaluation platform, after no more than **two years, but no less than one year** after the decision of the ARACIS Council has been communicated.

Such report shall detail how the RI has implemented the recommendations made in the EER, and shall be drafted as per **Annex 6** to this Guide.

#### 5.3. Appointing the expert evaluator; drafting and discussing the follow-up evaluation report

The PR shall be analysed by an external quality evaluation expert, usually one of the experts involved in the external quality evaluation procedure of the DSUM in question. If the progress report is incomplete or contains insufficient data and evidence, the expert shall ask the evaluated institution for clarifications and/or additions.

The expert shall draft their own follow-up report (FER) as per **Annex 7** to this Guide, on the electronic

evaluation platform of ARACIS. The content of the FER shall be discussed with the representatives of the EI in a meeting that is usually organised online. A joint meeting can be organised with several HEIs or EPs for the same master domains, to share experience and best practices.

#### 5.4. Changing the maximum number of students that can be schooled

According to art. 58 para. (3) of the *Methodology*, the RI can request a change of the maximum number of students that can be schooled, during the follow-up evaluation process in the case of accreditation or periodic evaluation procedures. In this case, the expert evaluator shall draft judgements on the fulfilment of the performance indicators assessed as partially fulfilled during the external evaluation procedure, while taking into account the maximum number of students allowed for schooling, as requested by the RI.

The request can only be allowed if all the performance indicators are assessed as fulfilled.

#### 5.5. Validation of the follow-up evaluation report

The Permanent Speciality Commission shall analyse and validate the follow-up evaluation report in a meeting. The results of the validation shall be noted in the minute of the meeting.

If a change of the maximum number of students that can be schooled has been requested, the PSC shall draft a minute in which it shall issue its reasoned opinion regarding the validation or invalidation of the expert's findings in the external quality evaluation during the follow-up evaluation process.

The minute of the PSC shall be analysed by DESU and the ARACIS Council, and the Council shall issue a decision on the change of the maximum number of students that can be schooled. The decision shall be communicated to the RI and the Ministry of Education and Research by e-mail within no more than **45 days** after it has been passed.

The follow-up evaluation report shall be published on the ARACIS website.

*Approved by*

*Decision of the ARACIS Council no. 83/H/03.04.2025*