

# **SALEIE – Policy in Higher Education - A Study Case - Romania**

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# 1. External evaluation of the bachelor programmes in Romania – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU

## 1.1 The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) was established in 2005 and is an autonomous public institution, of national interest, whose main mission is the external evaluation of the Romanian higher education's quality, at the level of study programmes, as well as from the institutional point of view.

As of September 2009, ARACIS is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA and is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - EQAR.

The agency's strategy reflects the **mission** assumed by ARACIS in order to constantly assure and improve quality in the Romanian higher education, as well as its own activity, and may be described by the following major objectives:

- improving the external evaluation methodology, in full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ESG;
- increasing the role of students and employers, as final beneficiaries, within the process of evaluation and assurance of education quality;
- creating a quality culture in the Romanian higher education;
- establishing a permanent partnership with all institutions in the national higher education system (MECTS, CNCSIS, CNFIS, ACPART) as well as with the economic-social environment, in order to correlate higher education with the labour market.

The Agency is carrying out its activity according to the best international practices, which are taken in its own Methodology and whose implementation is focused towards quality assurance and evaluation of the Romanian higher education, as part of the **European Higher Education Area**.

## 1.2 External Evaluation

Study programmes (Bachelor's degrees) accreditation external evaluation:

- stage I - study programmes temporary authorisation external evaluation (programme authorisation) – for the first two years of a new programme,
- stage II - study programmes accreditation external evaluation (programme accreditation) – each **5 years**.

On the basis of **the application** to start the external evaluation procedure for the temporary authorisation / accreditation, **submitted** to the accreditation department of ARACIS **by the education provider**, the ARACIS Council decides the starting of the external evaluation procedure if the following conditions are cumulatively fulfilled:

- together with the application, the education provider also submitted the **Internal evaluation report**,

- the education provider proves with relevant documents to have paid the fee provided for by the law for the temporary authorisation procedure, respectively the accreditation;
- for the accreditation, it shall respect the condition that it must be a 2-year period between the graduation date of the first series of graduates and the application's date of submission for accreditation. We must also specify that overrunning this time limit implies the proposal to cancel the temporary functioning authorisation.

Compulsory normative requirements for the study programmes temporary functioning **authorisation** referring to (see the details listed below in paragraph 1.4):

- the legal organisation framework,
- teaching staff,
- educational process content,
- the students,
- the scientific research,
- the material basis.

Compulsory normative requirements for the study programmes **accreditation** referring to:

- the legal organisation framework,
- teaching staff,

Supplementary in regard with the authorisation:

- in order to obtain accreditation, the higher education institution must prove that the discipline tenured university teachers have elaborated courses and other works necessary to the educational process, which completely cover the respective discipline issues, stipulated in the analytical syllabus;
- the higher education institution's management ensures the multiplication of the abovementioned works and places them at the students' disposal in adequate number;
- educational process content,
- the students,

Supplementary in regard with the authorisation:

- for the accreditation, the first three series of graduates of higher education institutions with temporary functioning authorisation take the academic degree exam at the accredited faculties that have the same academic degree field or study programme established by ARACIS. The examination commissions cannot comprise the teaching staff who have developed activities at the faculties or study programmes of the students who shall take the respective academic degree exam;
- in order to accreditate a study programme, the institution must prove that: minimum 51% of the total of graduates from each of the first three series of graduates passed the academic degree exam; minimum 40% of total of graduates from the first three series of graduates are employed with legal labour contract on positions corresponding to the specialisation obtained at the graduation;
- the scientific research,

Supplementary in regard with the authorisation:

- the institution's own teaching staff develops scientific research activities in the disciplines field comprised in their teaching load;
- the material basis.

### 1.3 List of academic degree studies fields

Engineering Sciences (selection from **SALEIE** point of view):

- COMPUTERS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: Computers, Information Technology, Computer and IT, Systems for National Protection and, Security, Information Engineering.
- ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING: Electric Systems, Power Electronics and Electrical Commands, Electrotechnics, Instrumentation and Data Acquisitions, Electromechanics, Electrical Engineering and Computers.
- ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Applied Electronics, Telecommunications Technologies and Systems, Telecommunications Software Networks, Microelectronics, Optoelectronics and Nanotechnologies, Remote Controls and Transportation Electronics, Military Electronic, Equipment and Systems, Transmissions.
- SYSTEMS ENGINEERING: Automatics and Applied Computer Science, Equipment for Modelling, Simulation and Automated Conduction of Fight Actions, Multimedia Systems Engineering.
- MECHATRONICS AND ROBOTICS: Mechatronics, Robotics.
- APPLIED ENGINEERING SCIENCES: Industrial Computer Science, Electrical Engineering Applied Computer Science, Engineering Applied Mathematics and Computer Science,

## **1.4 Compulsory normative requirements for the study programmes temporary functioning authorisation referring to**

### **1.4.1 The legal organisation framework**

With regard to the legal organisation framework and functioning of the higher education institution as an education providing institution, its mission and objectives, the requirements are:

- in order to obtain the temporary functioning authorisation the higher education institution must prove its own legal status, established by the constitutive document;
- the education provider that intends to obtain the temporary functioning authorisation must prove that the study programme has a well-defined didactic and research mission;
- the study programme is in compliance with the mission of the higher education institution; the mission of the higher education institution also contains elements of specificity and opportunity in compliance with the qualifications' national framework.

### **1.4.2 The teaching staff**

With regard to the teaching staff the requirements are:

- the teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions;
- the university teachers tenured in the higher education institution where they hold their basic position are taken into consideration for the temporary functioning authorisation for a single teaching load created according to the law;
- in order to ensure the quality of teaching activities, the university teachers tenured in higher education cannot cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching loads, regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity;
- the university teacher tenured in higher education according to the law, retired at age limit or for other reasons, shall lose the quality of tenured university teacher and is considered

associated university teacher, not being able to cover more than one teaching load in the respective educational institution;

- in order to obtain the temporary functioning authorisation, the higher education institution must have at every institutional structure and for every academic degree programme leading to a different university qualification, at least 70% of all the positions in the teaching loads record, established in compliance with the legal requirements, covered by teaching staff tenured in higher education according to the law. Out of them, at least 25% shall be university professors and associate professors but not more than 50%. The number of full-time professors must exceed 40% of the total number of teaching positions legally created;
- the number of professors legally tenured in higher education, taken into consideration for the temporary functioning authorisation of every institutional structure and for every academic degree study programme, is the one resulted taking into account the full-time teaching loads from the teaching loads record and the teaching load fractions they cover at the respective structure or programme;
- associated university teachers, not tenured in higher education, may hold a vacant position in the teaching loads record of the unit submitted to ARACIS evaluation only if they comply with the legal requirements for occupying the respective position;
- the discipline tenured university teachers must hold the scientific title of doctor or be Ph.D. students in the disciplines' field of the occupied position; the other university teachers must have the initial training and abilities in the field of the discipline they teach;
- the associated university teachers have the obligation, by written statement, to notify the manager of the institution where they hold their basic position, as well as of the institution they are associated at, the number of academic hours carried out by association;
- the teaching staff occupying positions of junior assistant or assistant professor must have certified teaching training;
- the teaching staff holding the degree of university professors, first class specialists in a certain field, who have surpassed the retiring age, must not represent more than 20% of the total positions from the teaching loads record;
- the higher education institution covers, during at least one academic degree cycle, the activities provided for at the disciplines from the educational curriculum with competent teaching staff.

### **1.4.3 The educational process content**

With regard to the educational process content the requirements are:

- in order to obtain the temporary functioning authorisation, educational curricula must comprise fundamental disciplines, speciality disciplines in the field, as well as complementary disciplines, also grouped in compulsory, optional and elective disciplines, in compliance with the specific normative requirements on domains established at national level;
- the disciplines of study within the educational curricula are provided for in a logical succession and aim at the fulfilment of the following requirements:
  - the defining and precise determination of the general and speciality competences according to the academic degree study fields, related to the competences corresponding to the master university studies;
  - compatibility with the national framework of qualifications;
  - compatibility with plans and study programmes similar with those in the European Union countries and other countries of the world, the disciplines' share being expressed in ECTS study credits;
  - the disciplines of study comprised in the educational curricula have analytical syllabuses which comprise the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, the distribution of

classes, seminars and applicative activities etc., according to topics, the students' evaluation system, the minimal bibliography;

- the classified list of disciplines comprised in the educational curriculum and the content of these disciplines, specified by the analytical syllabuses, correspond to the academic degree field and to the study programme the respective educational curricula were drawn up for, and are in compliance with the stated mission;

- the academic year shall be structured on two semesters of 14 weeks on the average, with 20–28 hours / week, for the 1st cycle of academic degree studies, according to the academic training domains;

- each academic year shall have 60 credits transferable in the European system (ECTS) for the compulsory disciplines, regardless of the type of education – full-time education, parttime education, distance learning; taking into account that, by the law, the evening classes duration is one year longer than of the equivalent full-time programme, a semester may have less than 30 credits, but within the total of academic degree cycle, the number of transferable study credits must remain 180 or 240, as the case may be;

- the types of education such as “evening classes”, “part-time education”, “distance learning” or other types of educations, which do not presume the compulsory presence in the university campus, cannot be organised unless “full-time education” is also organised;

- elective disciplines, irrespective of the study semester they are provided for in the educational curriculum, finish by an “examination test”, and the credits they are allocated are over 30 of the respective semester;

- the proportion between the class hours and those concerning applicative didactic activities (seminars, laboratories, projects, practice periods etc.) must be 1/1, with an accepted deviation of  $\pm 20\%$ ;

- the academic degree study programme the education plans were elaborated for, comprises practice stages of 2 – 3 weeks per year, starting with the 2nd year of study, as well as stages for drawing up the academic degree paper, for the last year of study;

- for the practice stages, the higher education institution concludes collaboration agreements, contracts or other documents with the practical training units, which stipulate: the place and period of practice, the type of organisation and guidance, the persons in charge at the educational institution and at the training unit etc.

- examinations represent at least 50% of the verification types of the disciplines of study provided for in the educational curriculum.

#### **1.4.4 The students**

With regard to the students the requirements are:

- the students' recruitment is carried out according to the university's own admission procedures;

- the registration to the entrance examination is carried out on the basis of the high school graduation diploma or other equivalent documents of study;

- the study groups (series, groups, subgroups) are dimensioned so as to ensure an efficient performance of the educational process;

- for the study programme submitted to evaluation, the possibility of the normal performance of the educational process, according to the law, results from the faculty's time table;

- the students' promotion rate for every year of study is at least 40% of the total number of students within the respective year;

- the results obtained by the student throughout the education are certified by the Academic record;

- the institution has settled the student's completion procedure from one academic year into

another, according to the gathered study credits (ECTS), as well as the completion procedure of two academic years in a single year;

- the students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and specialities is settled by internal rules and shall not be performed during the academic year;
- for the graduates of temporarily authorised higher education institutions, who perform their academic degree examination at another accredited higher education institution, established by ARACIS, and who have passed this examination, the academic degree diplomas shall be issued by the institution organising the academic degree examination, with the compulsory specification of the institution ensuring the education. These diplomas are recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research;
- the granting of certificates and study diplomas complies with the legislation in force.

#### **1.4.5 The scientific research**

With regard to the scientific research the requirements are:

- the academic degree domain, respectively the study programme submitted to evaluation, has its own scientific research plan, included in the strategic plan of the faculty and of the institution it belongs to, certified by documents found at chairs, departments, faculty etc.
- the research topics comprised in the plan belong to the scientific area of the academic degree domain, of the study programme etc. submitted to evaluation;
- the teaching staff develops scientific research activities in the disciplines field comprised in their teaching load;
- the teaching and research staff perform scientific research activities valorised by publications in speciality magazines or publishing houses inside the country recognised by the National University Research Council or abroad, scientific essays presented on the occasion of various sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. inside the country and/or abroad, contracts, expertise, consultancy etc., on the basis of contracts or conventions concluded with partners inside the country and/or abroad, with evaluation certified by speciality commissions etc.
- the results of the scientific research carried out within the research laboratories belonging to the educational structure submitted to evaluation, are valorised by published scientific papers, patents etc.
- the faculty periodically organises with the teaching staff, researchers and graduates, scientific sessions, symposiums, conferences, round tables, while the reports are published in ISBN, ISSN scientific reports or in magazines dedicated to the organised activity.

#### **1.4.6 The material basis**

With regard to the material basis the requirements are:

- the material basis of the higher education institution submitted to evaluation must comply with the standards ensuring the performance of a quality educational process;
- in order to obtain the temporary functioning authorisation, the higher education institution must prove by adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study programme submitted to evaluation, for at least two years before the academic year, it possesses the following: owned or rented spaces which are adequate for the educational process; owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the educational curriculum, whose analytical syllabus includes activities of this kind; adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the educational curriculum, with utilisation licence; library equipped with reading room and its own book stock according to the disciplines; included in the educational curricula; the educational spaces' capacity for the study programme submitted to evaluation is: minimum 1

sqm/seat, in the lecture rooms, minimum 1,4 sqm/seat, in the seminar rooms, minimum 1,5 sqm/seat, in the library reading rooms, minimum 2,5 sqm/seat, in the IT laboratories and in those of speciality disciplines using the computer, minimum 4 sqm/seat, in the technical, experimental, project etc. discipline laboratories.

- the number of seats in the lecture, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups), according to the Ministry of Education and Research's standards;

- the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the educational curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment. Thus, at the level of a study group, there must be a computer for 2 students at most.

- the educational institution's libraries must ensure: a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students; their own book stock from Romanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to completely cover the disciplines from the educational curricula and out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses for the field submitted to evaluation, appeared during the last 10 years in recognised publishing houses; a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; a sufficient number of subscriptions to Romanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the assumed mission.

## **2. External evaluation of the master programmes in Romania – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Master studies provide either extensive insight into the field of Bachelor studies or a related field, or the acquisition of complementary competences in other fields, as well as the development of scientific research capacities. In accordance with legal provisions, master studies represent the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of university studies and a compulsory preparatory step for doctoral studies. General knowledge, specialized knowledge, general competences, cognitive abilities, specialized competences, stipulated by law, are established by regulations specific to each field, by regulations for master studies and syllabi elaborated by each higher education institution that is legally entitled to organize master studies, in accordance with the standards set for this purpose.

Master studies are organized in the following fundamental fields: exact sciences, natural sciences, humanities, theology, law, social and political sciences, economics, architecture and urbanism, physical education and sports, agricultural and forest sciences, medical sciences, engineering sciences, military sciences and information, arts. Each field can have several specializations or master programmes. Also, disciplinary or interdisciplinary master programmes can be organized. Master programmes can be research-oriented, in the sense of deeper insight into a disciplinary scientific field, complementary, in the sense of gaining interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary insight into a field of study, or professional, in the sense of acquiring professional competences in a specialized field. For the accreditation of an institution organizing master studies the fields, criteria, standards and performance indicators are presented in the next chapters.



## **2.2. Specific objectives of the accreditation of master programmes**

The academic evaluation master programme is mainly focused on the following aspects:

- The extent to which the master programme complies with the criteria, standards and performance indicators established in the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) Methodology.
- The extent to which the master programmes ensure deeper insight into the field of Bachelor studies or in a related field or the acquisition of complementary competences in other fields, as well as the development of scientific research capacities.
- The extent to which the general knowledge, specialized knowledge, general competences, cognitive abilities, and specialized competences provided under the law are found in the specific regulations of each field in the master study regulations and syllabi elaborated by each higher education institution.
- Inclusion of the master programme in the list established by Ministry of Education on the proposal of the ARACIS.
- Compliance with the number of transfer credit specified in the legal provisions, usually comprised between 90 and 120; as an exception, for fields where the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of university studies corresponds to a minimum number of 240 ECTS credits, the proposed minimum number of transfer credits for the master programme can be 60 (i.e engineering programmes).
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the completion of a psycho-pedagogic training module for future graduates who wish to work in primary and secondary education, as well as high school or university education.
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the organization of master studies in Romanian, in one of the languages of national minorities or in a world language.
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the employment of academic staff for the master programme.
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the elaboration and approval of the Curriculum for the master programme. The curriculum must comprise both advanced knowledge subjects within the field of master studies, and complementary training modules for rapid employment of the master graduate. The master student's training programme must also contain a de scientific research or vocational creation component, in accordance with the specificity of the field of study.
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the organization of admission for master studies.
- Compliance with regulatory provisions concerning the completion of master studies with a master thesis. The master thesis must prove the advanced scientific knowledge of the approached topic, contain elements of originality in the development or tackling of the topic, as well as ways in which they can be scientifically validated.

## **2.3. Methodological steps concerning the accreditation of master programmes**

Master studies can only be organized by accredited higher education institutions, as part of faculties or department established by Government Decision. In order to organize 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle university studies (master), the above-mentioned higher education institutions must obtain the approval of the Ministry of Education and Research, by Order of the minister, on the proposal of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, based on the periodical evaluation of the institutional capacity to provide an integrated learning and research environment, at national or international level.

The accreditation methodology for a master programme involves taking the following steps:

- Higher education institutions which, on the date when accreditation is requested, organize more than one master programme in one field, shall submit self-evaluation files to ARACIS seeking accreditation for all programmes in that field;
- Based on the request to start the external evaluation and accreditation procedure submitted to the Accreditation Department of ARACIS by the education provider, the ARACIS Council decides on starting the external evaluation procedure for the master programme;
- The education provider shall also submit, with the request, an internal evaluation report prepared according to the Methodology;
- Evidence is provided of the payment of the fee provided by law for the accreditation;
- The Accreditation Department of ARACIS selects the evaluation group members (commission) from the Registry of expert evaluators and appoints a coordinator of the evaluation mission, who is part of the Commission of permanent specialized experts;
- The commission reviews the internal evaluation report and conducts a site visit in the requesting institution to verify compliance with the standards referring to the fields and criteria provided in the Methodology. The results of verifications are documented by the members of the commission in the “Site visit checklist for accreditation”, which is signed by all of the members of the commission. The “Site visit checklist for accreditation” is discussed and approved in the Commission of permanent specialized experts, by fields. Based on the “Site visit checklist for accreditation”, members of the Commission of permanent specialized experts prepare the “Evaluation report for accreditation”, in which they propose, under signature, the accreditation of the study programme or, as appropriate, its non-accreditation;
- The “Evaluation report for accreditation” is submitted to the Accreditation Department of ARACIS, which reviews it and validates the experts report by verifying compliance with the evaluation methodology and submits it for debate and approval to the ARACIS Council;
- The ARACIS Council, based on the conclusions arising from debates, prepares the “Council Report”, which it submits to the Ministry of Education and Research with the proposal of accreditation or, as appropriate, non-accreditation of the master programme. The accreditation or, as appropriate, non-accreditation proposal for the requested master programme is validated after being submitted to voting by Council members, which must agree with that proposal in a proportion of 50% +1 of the total number of Council members, namely 8 favorable votes. This report must be signed by the representative of the ARACIS Council for that fundamental field of science, as well as by the office members;
- The higher education institution which has received the right to organize master studies in one or several fields is called Institution Organizing Master Studies (IOMS/IOSUM);
- The Ministry of Education and Research, based on the endorsement of ARACIS, prepares a Government Decision draft which it submits to the Government for the issuance of Government Decision for the accreditation of that master programme.

## **2.4. Normative requirements for the accreditation of master programmes**

Master programmes in a certain field are deemed accredited if at least one master programme in that field is accredited. A master programme can be established and can operate only if the university has its own teaching staff, with the title of professor or associate professor, for at least one half of the subjects in the programme. Higher education institutions that do not comply with the provisions of this article forfeit their right to organize master programmes in fields with nonconformities and to receive diplomas from the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation. The requirements for organizing and conducting master studies are the following.

### **2.4.1. The legal framework**

- The right to organize master programmes is only granted to accredited higher education institutions within Bachelor fields with accredited programmes;
- The education and scientific research mission assumed is justified by elements of pertinence and opportunity in relation to the national list of qualifications and the objectives of education, scientific research and professional training;
- The education and scientific research mission assumed matches the profile and specialization of the organizing education unit.

### **2.4.2. The teaching staff**

For the accreditation of a master programme, all teaching positions established according to legal norms will be covered by tenured staff members in higher education under the law, having the rank of professor, associate professor or lecturer, with the scientific title of doctor in the field of subjects in the held position, of which 80% should be employed full-time. At the same time, a master programme can be established and can function only if the university has its own tenured staff, with the title of professor or associate professor, for at least one half of the subjects in the programme. One priority in covering positions will be granted to doctoral supervisors working within the field of the programme or in related fields. The remaining seminar activities, applicative activities, projects etc. can be covered by staff members tenured in higher education with the scientific title of doctor in the specialty of subjects in the teaching position they hold, employed full-time in that institution. An exception applies to programmes achieved by international cooperation, attended by specialized staff from universities abroad. For these programmes, universities will present the agreements of bilateral cooperation underlying the programme, as well as the contract of cooperation for foreign staff (teachers and/or researchers).

### **2.4.3. The content of education process**

- The precise definition and delimitation of specialized competences, by fields corresponding to master studies;
- Compatibility with the national framework of qualifications;
- Compatibility with similar curricula and study programmes in states of the European Union and other states of the world, the weight of subjects being expressed in ECTS study credits.

### **2.4.4. Students**

Students are recruited by institution-specific admission procedures; registration to the admission test is only made based on a Bachelor's degree.

### **2.4.5. Scientific research**

- The higher education institution has its own research laboratories in the field of the master programme for which accreditation is requested. The equipping of laboratories meets the requirements for the approached topics. Existing equipment allow the conduct of national and international large-scale research.
- The master programme subject to evaluation has its own scientific research plan, included in the strategic plan of the faculty and in that of the institution to which it pertains, as attested by

documents that can be found in the offices of chairs, departments and faculties. Research topics comprised in the plan pertain to the scientific area of the master field of study.

- The teaching and research staff conducts scientific research activities, capitalized in publications in specialized journals or publishers, either CNCS (National Council for Scientific Research) - recognized national ones or foreign ones, scientific papers presented during sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. organized in the institution, in the country and/or abroad, contracts, expertise, consultancy etc., based on contracts or agreements concluded with partners from the country and/or abroad, with evaluation attested by specialized commissions etc. The results of scientific research conducted in the research laboratories of the institution subject to evaluation are capitalized in published scientific papers, patents etc.
- The faculty periodically organizes, with teachers, researchers and graduates, scientific sessions, symposiums, conferences, round tables, and the papers are published in ISBN/ISSN scientific bulletins or in journals dedicated to the organized activity.
- The faculty has an institutionalized scientific research center.
- The teaching and research staff is involved in national and international research grants.

#### **2.4.6. Material resources**

- The higher education institution must prove that it has its own laboratories, with appropriate equipment for all subjects.
- The higher education institution must prove that it has a library outfitted with a reading room and its own book stock, corresponding to the subjects provided in curricula. Books from the Romanian and foreign literature must exist in a sufficient number of copies to fully cover subjects in curricula, at least 50% of which should represent books or courses for the field subject to evaluation, published over the last 10 years with recognized publishers, as well as subscriptions to mainstream foreign specialized journals. The libraries of the higher education institution must ensure a sufficient number of subscriptions to Romanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the assumed mission, with emphasis on the existence of specialized collections and the starting year of the collection.

#### **2.4.7. Legal framework of master programmes**

- A master programme can only function if the university has its own teaching staff, with the title of professor or associate professor, for at least one half of the subjects in the programme.
- Higher education institutions that do not comply with legal provisions on the accreditation and functioning of master programmes in a field and those referring to their own tenured staff with the title of professor or associate professor shall forfeit their right to organize master programmes in fields with nonconformities and to receive diplomas from the Ministry of Education.
- The existence of several concurrent master programmes throughout the same academic year is conditioned by the compliance with legal provisions for all programmes in that field, regardless of how they were established, namely by accreditation by the relevant ministry on the proposal of ARACIS or organized by decisions of the university senate to evaluate compliance with legal provisions on covering the field with tenured teachers of the higher education institutions must make available to ARACIS all data concerning this aspect (including the employment sheet and the lists of teachers for all master programmes in the field).

To accredit a master programme or evaluate the conformity of field, all of the requirements under this methodology must be confirmed by proving documents prepared by the higher education institution requesting accreditation.

### **3. External evaluation of the doctoral programmes in Romania – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU**

#### **3.1 External Evaluation of doctoral programmes**

##### **3.1.1 Introduction**

Doctoral programmes correspond to the third cycle of university studies in the Bologna process and enable the acquisition of qualifications level 8 EQF/CEC, of the National Qualifications Framework. Doctoral programmes are organized on scientific fields in doctoral schools operating in Institutions organizing doctoral university studies called IOSUD. Doctoral schools are communities of teachers / researchers and PhD students in an IOSUD organized as administrative structures focused on scientific / artistic research and learning activities that are completed by PhD theses, scientific publications, innovation, patents, performance art and sports and other results of scientific research / creative arts

Doctoral study programs are of two types:

- PhD Scientific - the final result is the production of original scientific knowledge of international relevance, based on scientific methods, organized only full time form. Scientific doctorate is a prerequisite for careers in higher education and research;
- professional doctorate in art or sport – the final result is the production original knowledge based on application of the scientific method and systematic reflection on artistic creations with high level of sporty performance nationally and internationally and can provide a basis professional career in higher education and research in arts and sports.

Assessment of doctoral schools is made by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) or by another agency of quality assurance nationally and abroad, registered in EQAR, based on National Research Council reports (CNCS) on the quality of research and on reports of the National Council for the Recognition of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) on the quality of human resources. According the evaluation results of the doctoral school, ARACIS Agencies propose to the Ministry of National Education or, if appropriate, withdrawing temporary authorization / accreditation for the organization of doctoral studies. Authorization or accreditation of the doctoral studies organization of is attested by the Minister of National Education.

##### **3.1.2 Specific objectives of the temporary authorization, accreditation and periodic assessment of doctoral schools**

Academic evaluation of doctoral schools is focused mainly on the following aspects:

- Verification of compliance in doctoral school on the criteria, standards and performance indicators established by this methodology
- The relevance of studies and publications of the doctoral school for the research areas and the quality of human resources devoted to science and transversal skills training.
- Compliance with regulations on the organization of doctoral studies in Romanian language, in one of the languages of national minorities or in a foreign language.
- Compliance with regulations on the organization of the competition for admission to doctoral studies.

- Compliance with the requirement to carry out research projects involving PhD and which are finalized by publications;
- Presentation of doctoral theses to be a public examination, in compliance with quality standards and transparency;
- Compliance with the requirement that the program of doctoral studies courses not to repeat the cycle of undergraduate studies and master.

### **3.2. Methodological stages of provisional authorization, accreditation and evaluation of doctoral schools**

The request for triggering external evaluation procedure, the temporary authorization / accreditation / regular assessment submitted to the department's accreditation agency (ARACIS) empowered by the education provider, the authorized executive agency (ARACIS Council) decides the initiation of the external evaluation if the following conditions are cumulatively fulfilled:

- The education provider has programs for bachelor or master's degree in the field they intend to organize doctoral studies placed in classes A or B for advanced research and education universities and for education and research universities, respectively in class A for universities focused on education;
- The education provider has submitted also **the internal evaluation report**,
- The education provider proves with relevant documents to have paid the fee provided for by the law for the temporary authorization procedure, respectively the accreditation;

Council authorized agency (ARACIS) shall appoint a committee of external assessment consists of four evaluators with expertise in doctoral school, 2 of the authorized agency and one of the CNCS, respectively CNATDCU. One of the two members appointed agent is director of mission. One of the two members appointed agent shall be a member of the CNATDCU's committee of the specialization in which enframes the Doctoral School. All external evaluation committee members should have the quality of doctoral supervisor. Duties of CNATDCU member are to assess the human resource representative of the Doctoral School, while duties of CNCS member are the evaluation of the scientific production of the Doctoral School. External evaluation committee, called quality assurance agency, empowered in its register of assessors evaluate activities that meet the other criteria and standards for evaluating the Doctoral School.

The committee of external assessment formed of four members check, by visiting the applicant institution, the performance standards in areas, the legal procedures and criteria approved by this methodology. The verification results are recorded in a document called Visit Report that will be downloaded in a database and will be signed by all committee members and by institution's management, leadership IOSUD and school doctoral, both written and in electronic form.

External evaluation committee shall prepare a report containing an assessment quantitative and qualitative of data analysis validated, following the analysis of trends in the previous assessment (if regular assessment), an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the institution and validated by the Commission and a number of recommendations for improving the quality of which will be sent to the applicant institution. The report is structured in three distinct sections corresponding at the competences ARACIS, CNCS and CNATDCU. Also, the report of the external evaluation must contain a recommendation on accreditation / non-accreditation, if the accreditation process or the issue of trust / distrust for

periodic evaluation. Provisional authorization doctoral school can not stretch for more than 5 years.

The evaluation report prepared by the experts who carried the visit shall be submitted for review by the General Council CNATDCU and CNCS, in specialized committees for each field that is part of the doctoral school. CNCS and CNATDCU issue reports are sent to the agency's evaluation. Accreditation Department prepares its own report. The two reports, of the Commission's external evaluation and of the accreditation Department are public documents. Agencies Council vote final decision and elaborates "Council Report". Council report can not be positive if one of the subsequent reports is negative.

This report is submitted to the Ministry of National Education, with the proposal for granting or not granting a temporary authorization, or accreditation/non-accreditation of doctoral school and it is published on the Agency's website.

Assessment process of Doctoral schools is done differently on the two stages the educational process is structured (advanced studies program and research program / artistic creation). Evaluations of advanced studies establish the compatibility with the standards related to Master's degree programs of research and / or similar programs. The evaluation committee grants the trust or distrust both advanced study program and for the scientific research / creative arts. A doctoral school can get the rating of trust and the notification for accreditation if both of procedures phase are reliable.

### **3.3. Minimum normative requirements for provisional authorization / accreditation / regular assessment of doctoral schools, doctoral fields**

Minimum normative requirements for provisional authorization / accreditation / regular assessment of doctoral schools, on doctoral fields, refers to the legal framework for the organization and functioning of the doctoral school, to content of teaching and research / artistic creation, scientific ethics, and higher education, the material basis of the higher education institution.

#### **3.3.1. The legal framework for the organization and functioning of the doctoral school**

Doctoral study programs are organized and conducted only by IOSU Ddoctoral schools. A doctoral must contains at least 3- 5 thesis supervisors. In an IOSUD can be more doctoral schools, organized in different scientific fields. Each doctoral school has a regulation that determines how the doctoral study programs are organized and conducted.

Doctoral School's rules establish criteria, procedures and mandatory standards of at least the following:

- Accepting new members Advisers and regulations relating to the manner in which a doctoral supervisor may be excluded from doctoral school;
- The mechanisms by which decisions are made regarding structure and content of the training program based on advanced university studies;
- The change of the doctoral supervisor of a particular student and procedures for conflict mediation;
- Conditions in which doctoral program may be interrupted;
- How to prevent fraud in scientific research, including plagiarism;
- Providing access to research resources;

- Determining the costs of education and tuition fees; such fees may be covered partially or fully by the university.

### **3.3.2. Content of teaching and research / creative arts**

Doctoral study program comprises:

- A training program based on advanced university studies in the doctoral school;
- An individual program of scientific research and artistic creation.

Doctoral study programs provide skills training (content, cognitive and research) in specialty areas, as well as some transversal competences.

The content of individual program of scientific research and artistic creation will highlight:

- Tradition and results of doctoral school;
- The developing of a research plan of the thesis;
- Concrete and achievable targets research of the thesis, including the production of publications;
- The existence of the theoretical content related experiments plan if necessary;
- Other factors considered relevant.

### **3.3.3. Scientific ethics, professional and academic**

Doctoral School with the doctoral supervisor must inform the student about scientific ethics, and higher education and to verify compliance, including:

- Compliance with ethics during the conduct doctoral research;
- Compliance with ethics in drafting and finalizing the thesis.

In the event of academic fraud, the violations of the university ethics or deviations from good practice in scientific research, including plagiarism, student and / or the doctoral supervisor / are accountable to the law.

### **3.3.4. The material**

- HEIs / doctoral school must demonstrate that it has its own laboratories, libraries and other facilities for advanced scientific research with proper equipment.
- HEI-doctoral school must demonstrate that it has equipped library with reading room, its own book and virtual library. Libraries educational institution provides a sufficient number of Subscription to Romanian and foreign publications and periodicals, its mission properly.