



THE ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ENQA
Registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - EQAR

The New Methodology for External Evaluation of the Quality of Higher Education developed by ARACIS

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Summary

- About ARACIS
- Romanian Higher Education System
- External Evaluation Activities
- The New Methodology for External Evaluation


About ARACIS




The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance
in Higher Education



QUALITY
STANDARDS
EXTERNAL EVALUATION
QUALITY CULTURE
EDUCATION
ESG-2015

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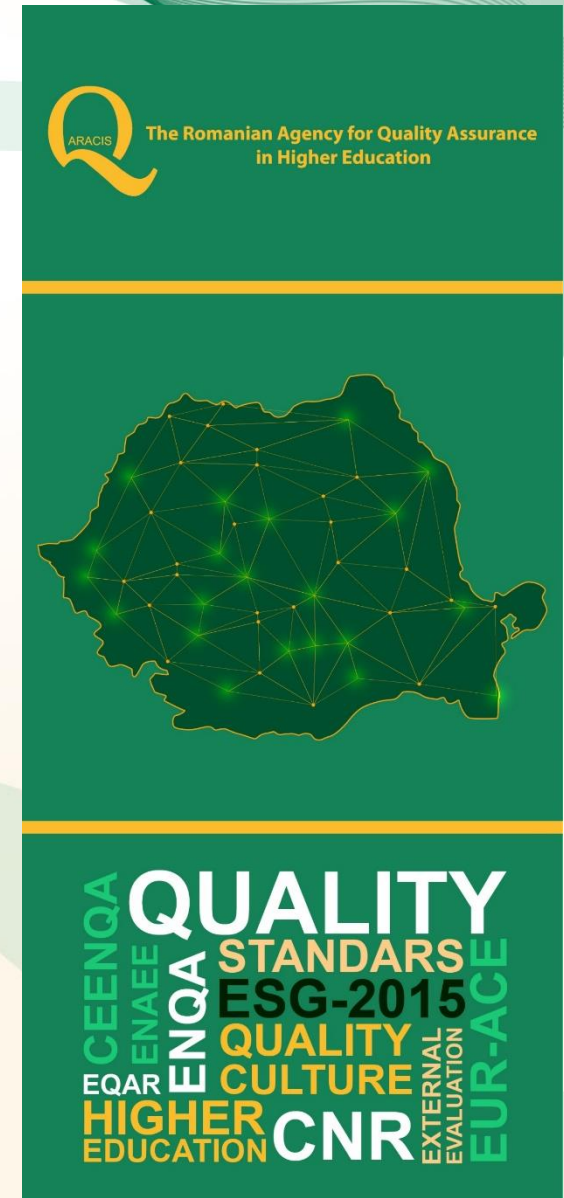
ARACIS was established in 2005, as a continuation of the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation in Romania, founded in 1994



Other activities

Nevertheless, ARACIS, as the national quality assurance agency, has the role of contributing to the enhancement of the quality of education in Romania, through the following attributions that are specific to its main mission:

- a) **formulates and periodically reviews**, based on good practices, standards and indicators for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education;
- b) **collaborates with the Ministry of Education** and with the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance and Inspection in Pre-University Education, hereinafter referred to as **ARACIIP**, in developing and promoting policies and action strategies to increase the quality of education in Romania;
- c) ARACIS and ARACIIP meet biannually to harmonize intersectionally the policies and strategies applied in the field of evaluation and quality assurance in education;
- d) organizes, annually, **consultations with the Ministry of Education, ANC, National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, CNR, higher education institutions, national student federations and national representative unions** in higher education to discuss annual priorities in the field of quality assurance of education;

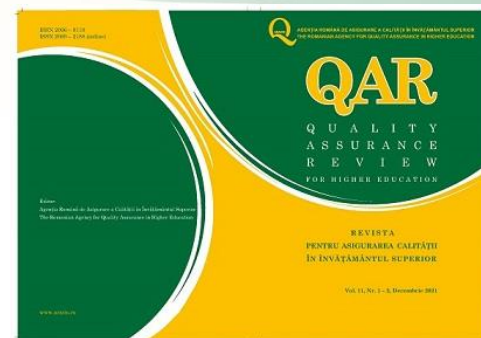




Other activities

- e) elaborates and publishes manuals, guides, synthesis works of good practices for evaluation and quality assurance;
- f) elaborates periodically, every 3 years, system analyses on the quality of higher education in Romania;
- g) collaborates with similar agencies in other countries to develop and implement effective measures to improve the quality of higher education study programs;
- h) publishes an annual report on its own work;
- i) elaborates, every 5 years, self-assessment reports on the quality of its own activity, in order to prepare the external evaluation by competent entities in this field;
- j) organizes training courses, conferences and seminars in the field of quality assurance and evaluation of education;
- k) participates in national and international programs and projects;
- l) provides consultancy in the field of quality assurance and evaluation of education, **in compliance with the legal regime of conflicts of interest.**

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education (QAR)

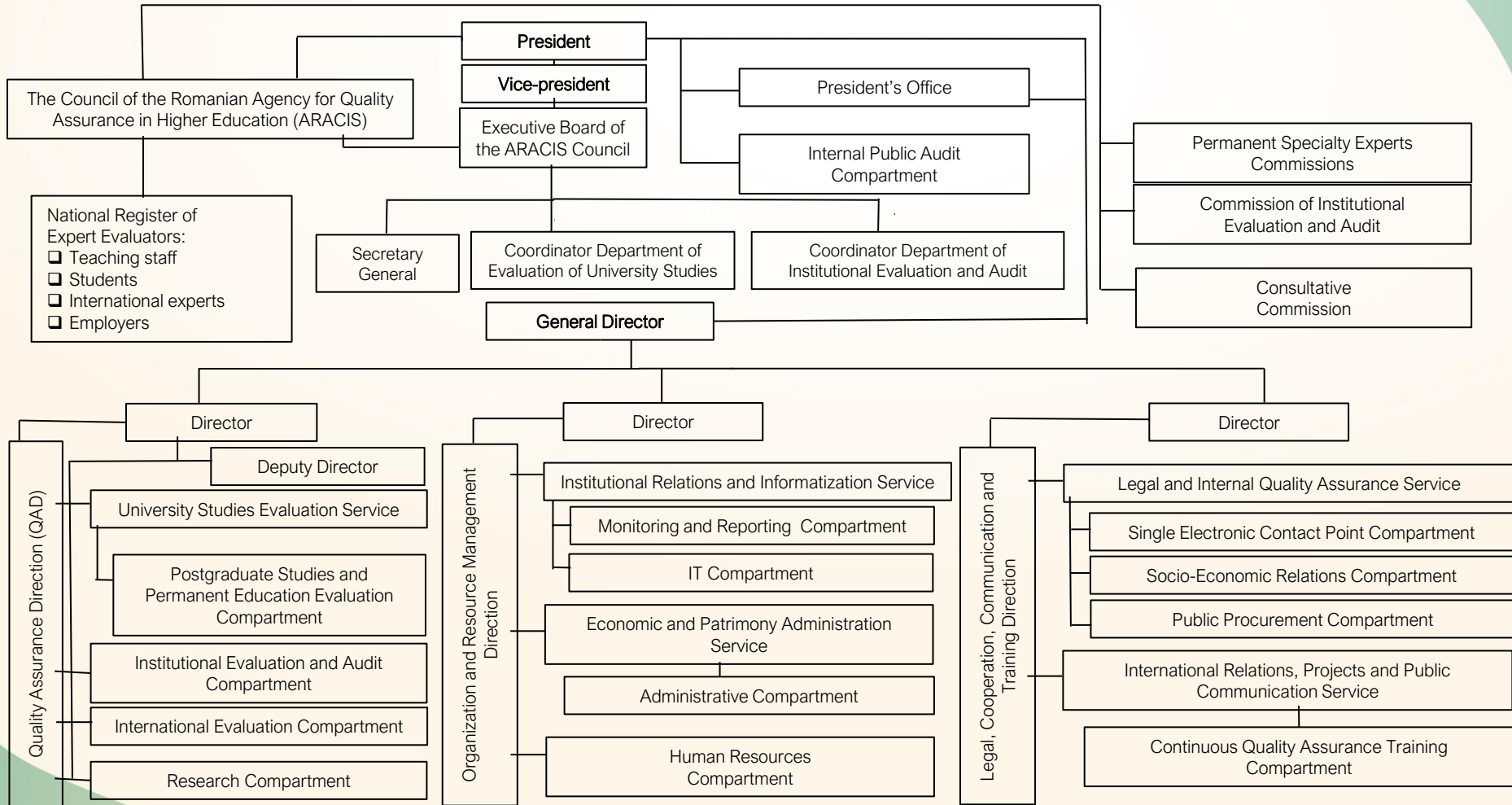


- ✓ An academic publication, edited by ARACIS, twice a year, focusing on quality assurance in Higher Education;
- ✓ Facilitates good practice transfer and communication between internal and external experts;
- ✓ Contributes to the promotion of quality assurance culture development
- ✓ QAR is indexed in the following international catalogues and databases: EBSCO, J-Gate and UlrichsWeb.

<https://www.aracis.ro/en/about-qar-magazine/>



Organisational Chart



Total number of technical staff positions 84 (61 occupied as of September 2024)

➤ The Council of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)

➤ Permanent Specialty Experts' Commissions

C1: Exact Sciences and Natural Science

C2: Humanist sciences and theology

C3: Legal Sciences

C4: Social, Political and Communication Sciences

C5: Administrative Sciences, Education Sciences and Psychology

C6: Economic Sciences I

C7: Economic Sciences II

C8: Arts, Architecture, Urban Planning, Physical Education and Sports

C9: Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and Veterinary Medicine

C10: Engineering Sciences I

C11: Engineering Sciences II

C12: Medical Sciences

C13: Distance learning and part-time learning education

➤ Commission of Institutional Evaluation and Audit

➤ Consultative Commission

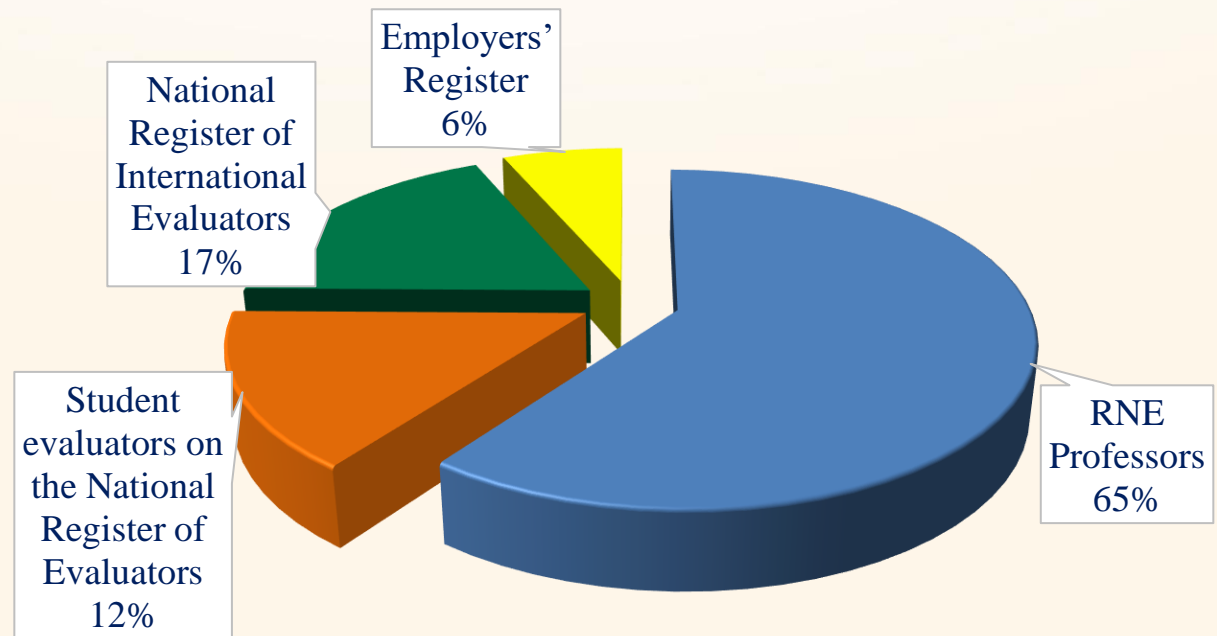


National Register of Evaluators

ARACIS has its own Register of Experts evaluators, composed as follows:

- **1125 national evaluators** (professors, associate professors, and lecturers);
- **106 national employers;**
- **211 national students;**
- **294 international evaluators** (professors, associate professors, and lecturers).

➤ [ARACIS Code of ethics and rules of conduct](#)





Romanian Higher Education System

Higher education in Romania

- **86 accredited HEIs**, out of which 52 publicly funded, 34 private HEIs and 3 organisations provisionally authorised to provide university-level study programmes;
- 544.623 students;
- Number of specialisations and students at each level of higher education in Romania (2023-2024):

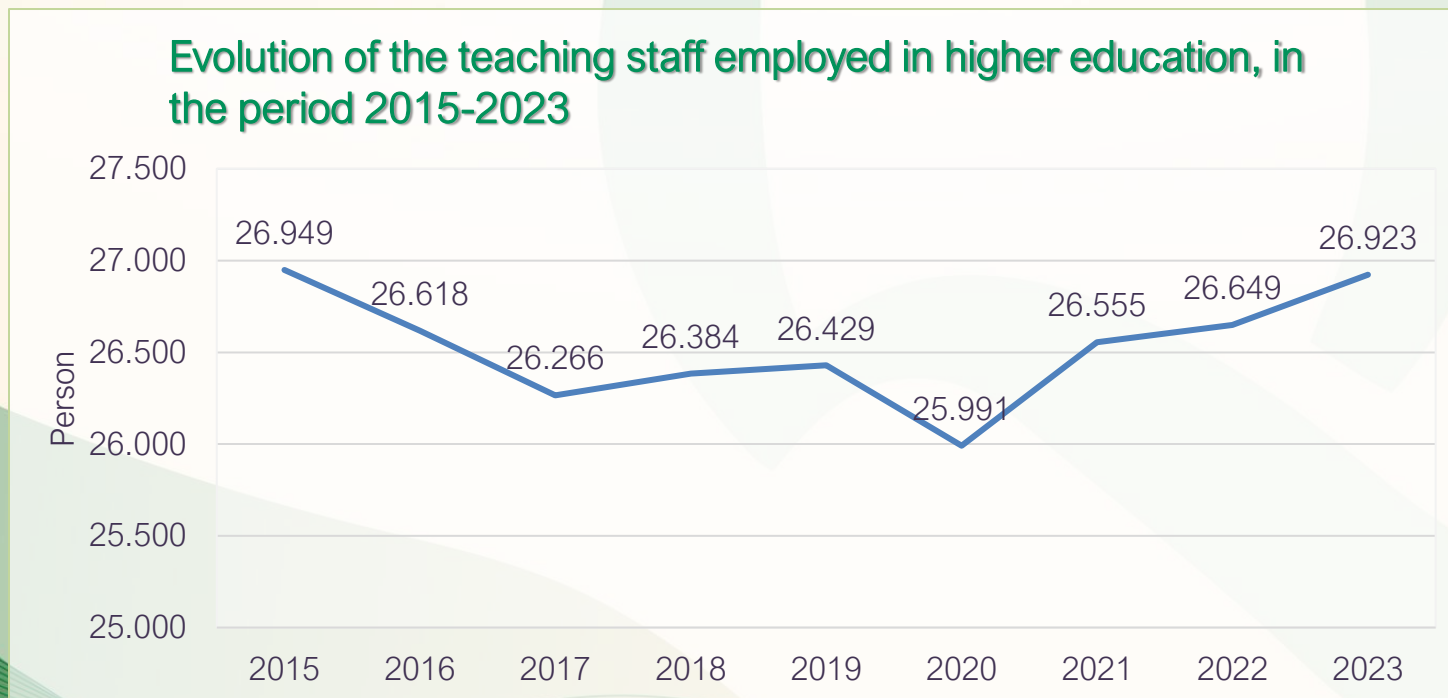
Cycle / Level	No. of university study programmes	No. of university study domains	No. of students *
Bachelor (level 6) Students enrolled - Bachelor studies	2.538	-	414.998
Master (level 7) Course attendees enrolled in Master studies and post-graduate courses	2.667	876	107.995
Doctoral (level 8) Course attendees enrolled in PhD and advanced research post-doctoral programs	-	432	21.630

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INS) database, accessed September 2024

Evolution of the number of enrolled students and teaching staff employed in higher education, in the period 2015-2023

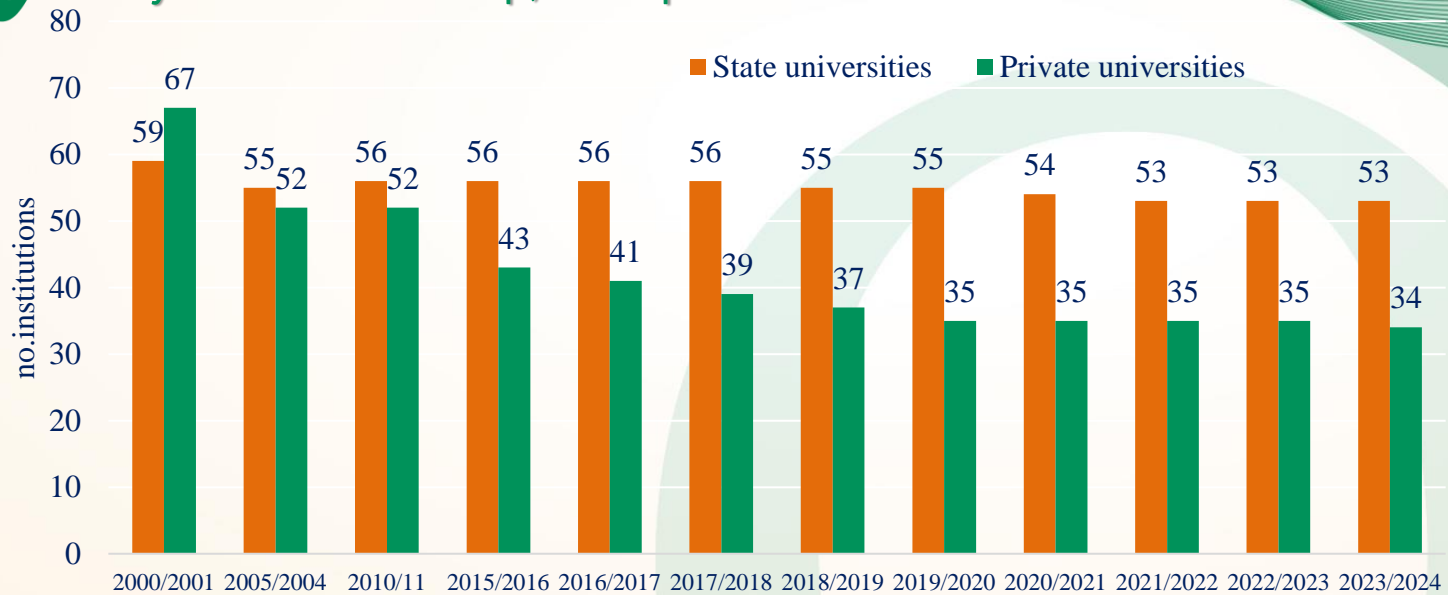
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total students	535218	512432	519115	513333	521323	537414	531613	516632	544623
Teaching staff employed in higher education	26.949	26.618	26.266	26.384	26.429	25.991	26.555	26.649	26.923
Ratio of students/teaching staff employed in higher education	19	19	20	19	20	21	20	19	20

Note: *Doctoral students on fixed-term contracts are included. Associated teaching staff are not included. In the analyzed period, associated teaching staff represent a share of 20-30% of the total number of teaching staff working in HEIs (according to Ministry of Education sources).

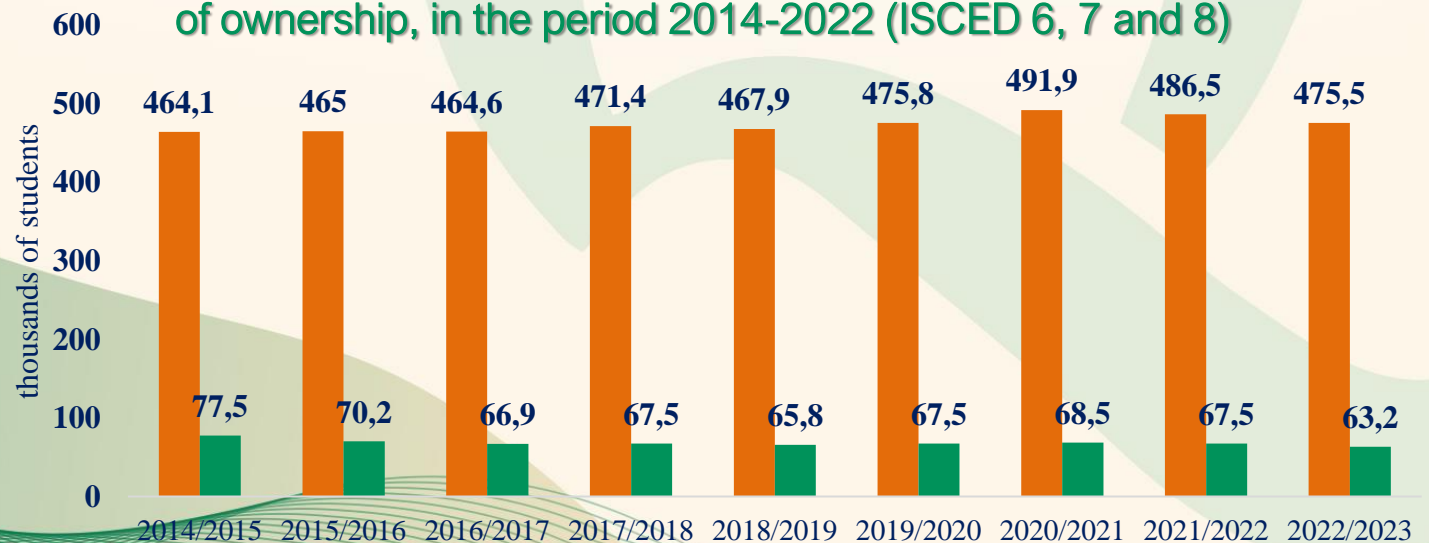




The number of higher education institutions and faculties by forms of ownership, in the period 2000-2024



The number of students enrolled in higher education by forms of ownership, in the period 2014-2022 (ISCED 6, 7 and 8)



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ARACIS
External evaluation
activities

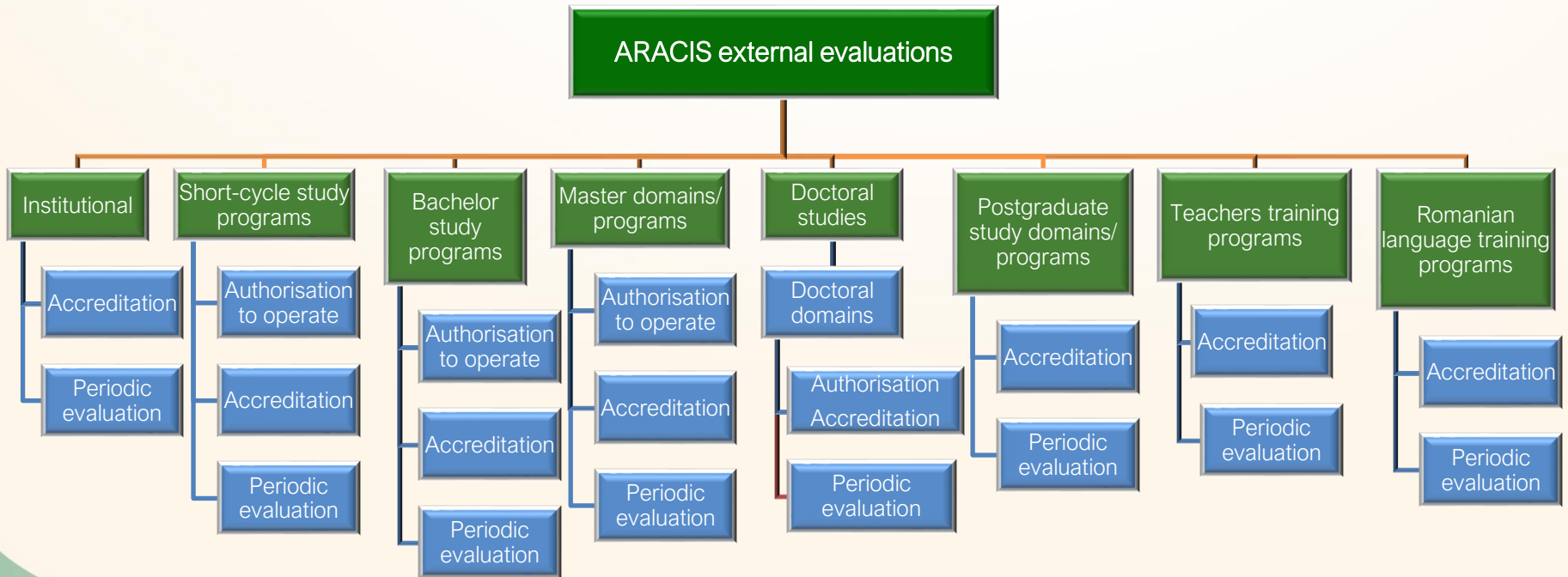


ARACIS External Evaluation activities

- **Provisional authorising to operate:** short-cycle study programs, bachelor study programs, master study domains, doctoral study domains;
- **Accreditation:** institutional, short-cycle study programs, bachelor study programs, master study domains, doctoral study domains, postgraduate study domains;
- **Periodic evaluation:** institutional, short-cycle study programs, bachelor study programs, master study domains, doctoral study domains, postgraduate study domains.

At the HEIs' request, on the occasion of the periodic evaluation of accredited Bachelor study programs (in the Engineering field), ARACIS can also award **the EUR-ACE® Label**.

External evaluation activities in the ARACIS portfolio





External evaluation activities period 2018-2023

Evaluation activity	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Institutional Evaluation	9	11	6	23	22	21	92
Programme Authorisation (First Cycle)	42	31	40	47	47	58	265
Programme Accreditation (First Cycle)	264	358	189	499	434	475	2219
Programme Accreditation and awarding of EUR-ACE Label (First Cycle)	5	2	7	5	16	20	55
Approval of new study programmes in accredited study domains (Second Cycle)	2	8	5	12	7	79	113
Study domain Accreditation (Second Cycle)	13	285	146	117	164	63	788
Evaluation of institutions organising doctoral study programs (IOSUD)	-	-	-	50	-	-	50
Study domain Accreditation (Third Cycle)	-	-	-	398	14	44	456
Study domain Authorisation (Third Cycle)	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
TOTAL	335	695	393	1151	706	761	4.041



Evaluation panels

INSTITUTIONAL:

- the Evaluation director
- the Coordinator of the institutional committee
- the Experts of the institutional committee
- the Representative of the consultative committee
- International expert for institutional evaluation
- 1-2 students
- Technical secretary

PROGRAMME:

- the Coordinator
- 1-2 academic staff
- 1 student

DOCTORAL STUDIES DOMAINS:

- the Coordinator
- International expert
- 1 student

The logo for ARACIS is a large, light green, stylized letter 'A' that serves as a background for the text. The background of the slide features abstract, flowing green and teal shapes, including a large 'A' shape and wavy lines, set against a light beige gradient.

ARACIS

**The New Methodology for
External Evaluation**



New Methodology for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education

- ➔ Law of Higher Education no. 199/2023 (the Law)
- ➔ Methodology for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education, approved through the Government Decision No. 962/2024 (enters into force 180 days after publication in the Official Gazette, that is February 09, 2025) (the Methodology).



The new legislation has the following main aims

consolidate the existing QA system based on the experience gained in the last 30 years

simplification and reducing burden for higher education institutions (HEI)

foster quality culture and enhancement

adapt better to the profile and mission of the HEI



New Methodology for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education

⇒ SIMPLIFICATION

- evaluation at the field of studies (domain) level for master and post-graduate and life-long learning study programmes;
- self-accreditation of master programmes in an accredited domain for accredited HEI, based on internal quality assurance procedures;
- for accredited HEI the authorisation step is not needed for master, doctorate (if they have an accredited master domain in the same field of studies), post-graduate and life-long learning domains
- two new types of institutional evaluations are introduced for HEI that comply with certain conditions:
 - audit
 - simplified evaluation
- the number of indicators is approx. 1/3, for programs/domains respectively 1/2 for institutional level, compared to the previous methodology:

Domains of evaluation	INSTITUTIONAL			PROGRAMS/DOMAINS		
	Criteria	Standards	Indicators	Criteria	Standards	Indicators
A Institutional Capacity	6	11	14	4	7	8
B Educational Effectiveness	9	16	20	9	13	17
C Quality Management	8	12	21	8	11	14
TOTAL	23	39	55	21	31	39



New Methodology for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education

⇒ FOSTER QUALITY CULTURE AND ENHANCEMENT

- consolidate follow-up for all external quality assurance procedures, that has the aim to support HEI in implementing the recommendations provided by the evaluation team;
- foster the role of internal quality assurance through self-accrediting master programmes and the introduction of institutional audit;
- reinforce the role of recommendations in the external evaluation procedures.



New Methodology for the external evaluation of the quality of higher education

⇒ MANTAIN RELEVANCE AND DIFFERENTIATION

- introduction of the simplified institutional evaluation, where HEI can propose indicators according to their missions;
- access to institutional audit and simplified institutional evaluation is allowed only for HEI fulfilling the following conditions:
 - has complied with the terms of accreditation and maintenance of accreditation, established by Law no. 199/2023, with subsequent amendments and completions, until the date of submission of the evaluation request;
 - has completed at least two consecutive periodic evaluations, at institutional level, concluded with accreditation maintenance reports;
 - has legal acts of authorization, accreditation, respectively of maintaining accreditation for all evaluated study programs/domains.
- the interpretation of external evaluation indicators it is made according to the mission of each HEI.



Decision-making

- ✓ the evaluation results for each performance indicator or benchmark performance indicator, as the case may be, are concretized as follows:
 - Fulfilled;
 - Partially fulfilled;
 - Unfulfilled.

- ✓ decisions regarding the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of standards shall be taken under conditions clearly set out in the Methodology, depending on the number of indicators not met or partially met;

- ✓ external evaluation reports are published on the ARACIS website and in DEQAR database, in order to ensure transparency and inform the beneficiaries of education.



Decision-making

- ✓ **The fulfillment of standards** within the evaluation process for accreditation or maintaining of accreditation leads to the **proposal for accreditation** or **maintaining of the accreditation** of the program/study domain, respectively of the institutional structure, as the case may be.
- ✓ **The non-fulfillment of standards** within the evaluation process for accreditation or maintenance of accreditation of the study program/domain, respectively of the institutional structure, shall be communicated, within 15 days from the date of the external evaluation report, by ARACIS to the Ministry of Education, which informs the requesting institution, within 30 days from the date of receipt of the communication from ARACIS. In these cases, ARACIS proposes the **conditional maintaining the authorization** or **the conditional maintaining of the accreditation**.
 - The applicant institution has the obligation, within one year, calculated from the date of information by the Ministry of Education, to request a new evaluation from ARACIS or the QAA that has carried out the previous evaluation.

Decision-making

- ✓ The decision of **non-compliance with standards** is taken when:
 - a) a **standard is not met**, except for the performance indicators related to the criterion provided in Article 226 (4) letter h) of Law no. 199/2023, with subsequent amendments and additions;
 - b) **more than 20% of the performance indicators** included in the annex are **partially fulfilled**;
 - More than 11 – institutional
 - More than 8 – study programs/fields of study
 - a) **more than 10% of the performance indicators** included in the annex are **partially fulfilled** and are part of the same evaluation area.
 - More than 6 – institutional
 - More than 4 – study programs/fields of study

Domains of evaluation	INSTITUTIONAL			PROGRAMS/DOMAINS		
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Conclusions

The new methodology is a significant step towards improving the quality assurance process in Romanian higher education

It streamlines procedures, enhances transparency, and promotes the continuous improvement of educational standards.

This will ultimately help Romanian universities better align with European and global standards, ensuring high-quality education for students






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MATURITY
PASSION

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