

**Approval of the Application
by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance (ARACIS)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee

Ref. RC12/2014/03

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-05-22

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1. The application of 29/11/2013 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee considered the external review report of September 2013 on the compliance of ARACIS with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The Register Committee found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how ARACIS complies with ESG.
3. The Register Committee further considered ARACIS' comments on the external review report, which were submitted with the application.
4. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from ARACIS as well as the chair of the review panel.

Analysis:

5. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:
6. **ESG 2.2:** The review report noted that ARACIS was in the course of developing a new methodology for accreditation and evaluation of master domains. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from ARACIS on further progress made, and noted that the detailed procedures and criteria to be used are still under development.

The Register Committee underlined that ARACIS will be expected to make a Substantive Change Report once the new methodology has been finalised and is being rolled out.

The Register Committee further noted that the review panel recommended that ARACIS further the involvement of students and stakeholders in all evaluations.

7. **ESG 2.3:** The review panel noted that ARACIS applied criteria from professional or statutory bodies in certain domains, but that these were not sufficiently transparent in ARACIS' public documentation.

The Register Committee noted ARACIS' statement in its comments to the review report that these criteria were now published or referred to explicitly in its document. This could, however, not be verified since the corresponding documents are in Romanian. This issue is therefore to be considered in the next external review of ARACIS.

8. **ESG 2.4:** When ARACIS was initially admitted to the Register, the further development of its criteria and processes, and their fitness for the declared purpose of supporting quality enhancement, was flagged.

The Register Committee noted that the review panel commended ARACIS at various places on its efforts to continuously optimise its processes and criteria towards supporting quality enhancement.

9. **ESG 3.7:** The standard requires that external assessment is carried out by “a group of experts”, which is understood to include the drafting and agreement on the report. When ARACIS was initially admitted to the Register, it was flagged for attention whether its report drafting procedures involve the expert panels and prevent undue influence on their conclusions.

The Register Committee considered the review report and sought and received further clarification by the chair of the review panel. The Committee concluded that, as far as programme evaluations are concerned, the role and involvement of the expert panels in drafting evaluation reports was now clear and appropriate.

For institutional evaluations, however, it did not become clear how the experts are involved in drafting and agreeing upon the main evaluation report, which serves as a basis for decision-making by the ARACIS Council, and whether the main report is agreed upon by the entire expert group. This matter has therefore been flagged.

The Register Committee noted that ARACIS does not yet involve students in all programme evaluation expert panels.

The Register Committee took note of the additional information provided by ARACIS on its ongoing efforts to recruit student experts for programme evaluations in cooperation with the Romanian national unions of students. The Committee further considered that ARACIS has decided to formalise the participation of students in its Permanent Speciality Commissions, which are involved in programme evaluations.

While the Committee welcomed the measures ARACIS has already taken, students should in principle be involved in all programme evaluation expert panels. This matter has therefore been flagged.

Conclusion:

10. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that ARACIS continues to substantially comply with the ESG and, therefore, renewed its inclusion on the Register.

ARACIS' renewed inclusion shall be valid until 30/09/2018¹.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

11. The following issues have been flagged for particular attention when considering a potential application for further renewal of inclusion. ARACIS is expected to address these issues specifically in its next self-evaluation report, setting out whether the issue has been resolved or indicating what progress has been made. ARACIS is further responsible for informing the coordinator of the next external review and the review panel of the need to address these issues in the external review report.

ESG 3.7: Role of expert group in agreeing reports

For institutional evaluations, it should receive explicit attention whether the entire expert panel is involved in drafting and agreeing upon the main evaluation report.

ESG 3.7: Involvement of students in programme reviews

It should receive attention whether ARACIS has further developed the participation of students in the expert groups for programme reviews.

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