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INDICATOR OF EDITIONS AND REVISIONS

Edition: Revision: Implementation date:	No. of reviewed section / sub-section and page	Type of change:		
		Modified	Added	Suppressed
Ed.1 Rev.1/15.09.2015	Sec.2./pag.6	X		
	Sec.3./pag.6		X	X
	Sec.4./pag.6-7	X	X	X
	Sec.5./pag.7-13	X	X	X
	Sec.6./pag.13-15	X	X	X
	Sec.7./pag.15	X	X	X
Ed.2 Rev.0/	Sec.2./pag.4	X		
	Sec.3./pag.4	X	X	
	Sec.4.2/pag.5	X		
	Sec.5.1/pag.6	X	X	
	Sec.5.2/pag.7	X	X	X
	Sec.5.3/pag.9-10	X	X	X
	Sec.6./pag.12-14	X	X	
Sec.7./pag.14-15	X	X		



OPERATING PROCEDURE
INITIATION, APPROVAL, MONITORING AND
PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC
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1. AIM

1.1. This procedure is aimed at defining the framework for the conduct of the process of initiation, approval, monitoring and periodic assessment of full-time bachelor's and master's degree programmes of study.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This procedure describes the methodology applying to the stages of initiation, approval, monitoring and periodic assessment of the bachelor's and master's degree programmes of study of 'Grigore T. Popa' University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași.

2.2. The procedure applies to all the *programmes of study* of the University.

3. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

SR EN ISO 9000:2015 – *Quality Management Systems. Basic Principles and Definitions.*

SR EN ISO 9001:2015 – *Quality Management Systems. Requirements.*

SR EN ISO 9004:2018 – *Quality Management. Quality of an Organization. Guidelines for a Long-Lasting Success.*

Order of the Secretary General of the Government no. 600/2018 approving the Internal Management Control Code for Public Entities

National Education Law no. 1 / 10.01.2011, with all later amendments;

Emergency Ordinance no. 75 of 12 July 2005 (*as amended*) – on education quality assurance;

Order of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Research no. 3928/21.04.2005 on education services quality assurance in higher education institutions;

Government's Ordinance no.75/2005 on education quality assurance, approved by the Law no.87/2006

Government's Decision no.1175/2006 on the organization of bachelor's degree courses of study and approving their fields and specialties, with later amendments and additions

Government's Decision no. 404/2006 on the organisation and conduct of master's degree courses of study

Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no.3235/2005 on the organization of the bachelor's degree course of study

Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 3617/2005 on the generalized implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no.3928/2005 on education services quality assurance in higher education institutions


Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no.4868/2006 on the diploma supplement

Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports no.5703/2011 on the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in higher education

Methodology of external assessment, reference standards and list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ARACIS

COR Code according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)

Charter and Regulations of 'Grigore T. Popa' University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași

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4. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

4.1. Definitions

Faculty – functional unit developing and managing programmes of study;

Programmes of studies – group of curricular units of teaching, learning, research, practical applications, and assessment resulting into an academic degree certified by a diploma and a diploma supplement.

Education provider – institution conducting activities of higher education based on legally approved programmes of study.

Curricular office – structure within the faculty appointed by the Faculty Council and approved by the university Management Board who analyse and suggest changes to the curriculum in line with the faculty’s and university’s education policy.

Standards, reference standards and performance indicators – regulations/documents describing the quality requirements that must be met by any education providing institution. The standards correspond specifically to the different fields, education assurance quality criteria, whereas the performance indicators measure the fulfilment of an activity by reference to standards.

Internal quality assurance of the study programmes – self-assessment actions, standards, requirements, measures and procedures implemented by the University designed to achieve, maintain and improve the quality of the study programmes.

Internal quality assessment – a systematic, independent and documented process carried out in the university from time to time or when needed, consisting of specific procedures, designed to collect evidence regarding the quality of education and to analyse objectively this evidence in order to determine the extent to which the education quality standards and performance indicators are met.

Monitoring – continuous instrumented supervision of the conduct of an activity and of the achievement of its expected results, within a predefined framework (procedure, methodology)

External quality assessment – a systematic, independent and documented process carried out on request from time to time or when needed, by a specialized body, based on an assessment report and on onsite assessments, in order to determine the extent to which the education quality standards and performance indicators are met.

Provisional operating license – the result of the first external assessment, based on the internal assessment report, which certifies the meeting of the minimum requirements of the education quality standards and performance indicators, which allows the provisional implementation and operation of a programme of study, as a pre-accreditation phase.

Accreditation – the result of the external assessment, based on the assessment report, which certifies the meeting of the minimum requirements of the education quality standards and performance indicators, which allows the operation of a programme of study.

4.2. Abbreviations

ARACIS – Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

COR – Romanian Standard Classification of Occupations


BCF – Curricular Office of the Faculty

CF – Faculty Council

BCO – Faculty Council Office

CEAC – Academic Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee

CA – Management Board

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RNCIS – National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education

5. PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION

5.1. General

Our bachelor's degree course of study provides a level of qualification appropriate to the pursuit of a profession in order to enter the labour market due to specialized general and specialized knowledge. Our bachelor's degree course of study provides broad knowledge and skills in different fields of study. The degree awarded after the completion of the undergraduate programme attests that its holder has acquired general and specialized knowledge and competences, as well as cognitive profession-specific skills. These are defined in accordance with the regulations in force for a proper classification of the graduate in the qualifications mentioned in the COR.

Our master's degree course of study allows in-depth learning in the field of undergraduate studies or in a related field, as well as the development of scientific research capabilities. Our master's degree studies may be held within the faculties that offer accredited bachelor's degree programmes in that field and master's degree studies.

'Grigore T. Popa' University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași provides bachelor's degree study programmes in accordance with the provisional licenses, accreditations and periodic assessments for the bachelor's degree fields and programmes of study approved according to the legislation in force.

'Grigore T. Popa' University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași provides master's degree study programmes in the bachelor's degree fields of study with accredited programmes. For specialities with 360 and 300 credits, the master's degree education is included in the bachelor's degree field of study (1st and 2nd cycles). Several master's degree programmes may correspond to each field of study with 240 and 180 credits, respectively. Interdisciplinary master's degree study programmes may be held within this framework.

External assessment is conducted in the faculty and/or university providing bachelor's and/or master's degree courses of study, for each bachelor's degree study programme and/or master's degree field, by a *specialized body, in order to determine the extent to which the education quality standards and performance indicators are met.*


Accreditation includes two successive stages:

- a) provisional operating license, which gives the faculty the right to conduct the education process and to hold admission competitions, where appropriate;
- b) accreditation, which, in addition to the rights described under let. a). Also gives the right to issue degree diplomas, certificates and other education documents recognized by the relevant ministry and to hold admission competitions, where appropriate, graduation examination, bachelor's degree graduation, *dissertation, doctoral thesis defence.*

Provisional operating license should be obtained for each 1st cycle academic programme of study resulting into a distinct academic qualification; all new programmes of study must be subjected to this licensing process.

External assessment of the bachelor's degree programmes of study *for the purposes of provisional operating license granting, accreditation and their regular assessment in order to determine their compliance with the general and specific education quality standards.*

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The **internal assessment** of the quality of education is a systematic multicriteria examination process of the extent to which ‘Grigore T. Popa’ University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași and its study programmes meet the standards, reference standards and performance indicators, according to the External Assessment Methodology of ARACIS and is carried out within the university by CEAC.


5.2. Initiation and approval of programmes of study

5.2.1. Initiation of a new bachelor’s degree programme of study

The initiation of a study programme aims to better adapt the offer of academic programmes of study to the demands of the socio-economic environment, in accordance with the academic quality requirements.

Stages:

- *Determining whether it is appropriate to initiate a new programme of study in the faculty, taking into account arguments based on labour market surveys, on analyses of programmes of study provided by other universities and on the available resources.*
- The preliminary study includes information about the:
 - a. labour market
 - b. compliance with the National Qualifications Framework
 - c. inclusion in the faculty/university strategy
 - d. provision of the necessary resources in compliance with the quality standards
 - e. draft curriculum
 - f. discipline description
 - g. coverage of the teaching needs by tenured and associate teaching staff*
- The dean, in cooperation with the department managers, appoints the team who will draft the initiation documentation of the new programme of study, *as well as the contact person with the assessment body;*
- After the documentation has been finalized, the Dean consults the BCF;
- The Dean consults the BCF and submits the file for approval by the CF;
- The Vice-Rector in charge of the teaching activity and the faculty Dean submits for endorsement the draft proposal of a new bachelor’s degree programme of study during a CA meeting, relying on arguments provided by the initiating faculty;
- CA orders the drafting of the self-assessment report in accordance with the assessment guidelines, based on data indicating:
 - *Legal organization and operation framework, mission and objectives*
 - *Management and institutional structures*
 - *Quality assurance in the University*
 - *Fitting the programme of study in the University policy*
 - *Compliance with the requirements of the general and specific standards and performance indicators*
 - *Description of the programme of study*
- The analysis of the external environment refers to the evaluation of the national and international economic and socio-cultural background;

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- The analysis of the external environment identifies the learning and vocational training needs, in compliance with the education regulations adopted by national and international bodies;
- The analysis of the internal environment refers to the evaluation of the existing offer of study programmes, the strategic objectives and the available resources of the university;
- The Dean suggests to the CF the composition of the work team and the contact persons in charge of putting together the self-assessment file;
- The self-assessment file must meet the criteria and performance indicators formulated by ARACIS and must provide relevant evidence about the compliance with the performance standards approved by the Senate of ‘Grigore T. Popa’ University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași, as well as evidence regarding the fulfilment of the specific academic assessment standards approved by ARACIS;
- The faculty dean sends to the Managing Board the request to initiate the external assessment procedure by ARACIS of the new study programme;
- After the CA has endorsed the external assessment request by ARACIS, it is submitted to the Senate for approval;
- After it has been approved by the Senate, the Rector sends the external assessment request to ARACIS for the endorsement/accreditation of the new programme of study, together with the whole self-assessment file;
- The external assessment is conducted by a team of ARACIS assessors and relies on documented objectives, field and assessment criteria;
- During the assessment process, the team of ARACIS assessors record the conformities or nonconformities they find and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the improvement of the programme of study.

During their assessment visit, the ARACIS experts are accompanied by the faculty dean or a person appointed by the latter, and the contact persons appointed by the faculty.


Provisional operating license to a programme of study

The provisional operating license is the document which gives the University and the faculty, respectively, the right to conduct the education process and, where appropriate, to organize admission to a programme of study.

The admission to that programme of study and the conduct of the teaching activity, respectively, may only begin after an approval from ARACIS has been received and after the Government’s Decision concerning the university structure on faculties / departments / fields / specialties has been published in the Official Journal of Romania, and only if the name of that programme of study is mentioned in that Government’s Decision.

Accreditation of a programme of study

The accreditation of a programme of study is done by a Government’s Decision initiated by the relevant ministry, based on the ARACIS opinion, within 90 calendar days of the sending of that opinion.

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The deadline for submitting the *external* assessment request by the university Rector for the accreditation of a programme of study operating based on a *provisional operating license* cannot exceed three years of the graduation date of the first class.

5.2.2. Initiation of a new master’s degree programme of study

The stages of initiation of a new master’s degree programme of study are similar to those specific to the initiation of a new bachelor’s degree programme of study, with the caveat that the faculty dean and appointed vice-rector are in charge of coordinating and conducting the whole initiation and implementation process.

5.3. Monitoring and improvement of programmes of study

Academic programmes of study are subject to a monitoring process designed to maintain and continuously improve their quality.

5.3.1. The monitoring of programmes of study is done systematically and includes planned actions of analysis of the specific activities and results of that programme of study, for instance:

- analyses carried out by the department / faculty / university management;
- assessment of the students’ and other stakeholders’ satisfaction about the implemented curricula.


5.3.2. Improvement of the programmes of study

5.3.2.1. The dean, department managers and Curricular Office member make suggestions of improvement of the programmes of study based on the following data:

- students’, graduates’ and employers’ requirements about the general and specific skills that any graduate will need in order to practise, in real conditions, the profession (specialty) for which he/she was trained;
- feedback from students and other stakeholders about the already implemented curricula;
- results of the analyses conducted about the curricula implemented by other high-performance universities (in Romania and abroad);
- requirements of applicable regulations;
- information collected from prior curricula development processes;
- results of national and international internal and/or external assessments.

The suggestions are endorsed by the *CF* and approved by the Management Board.

5.3.2.2. If the study programme improvement measure includes changes in the curriculum, it enters into force in the following academic year, starting with the 1st year of study and/or, where appropriate, with the other years of study.

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5.3.2.3. Changes to the curriculum of a bachelor’s degree programme of study

Any changes to the curriculum shall be made in compliance with the ARACIS accreditation criteria and may consist of:

- changes to an existing discipline, related to the no. of hours, no. of credits, name, *year of study*, etc.
- introduction of new disciplines
- removal of certain disciplines, which are additional disciplines to the minimum compulsory curricula of bachelor’s degree programmes of study recognized in the European Union

Stages:

- The dean *analyses with the Curricular Officer* the no. of hours /discipline, the no. of credits, the name of the discipline, new disciplines and *finds new ways to improve the teaching process, in compliance with the general and specific ARACIS quality standards*
- The department manager gathers such proposals from the teaching activity coordinators.
- After consultations within the discipline, the teaching activity coordinators send the proposals of the department manager, who analyses them together with the members of the Department Council, decides on the changes, where appropriate, and sends them to the faculty Dean.
- The Dean convenes the members of the BCF, who analyse the proposals in compliance with the faculty’s and university’s education strategy and found the conclusions of their analysis in a BCF meeting minutes and/or in a synthetic document, where appropriate.
- The Dean analyses the documents together with the BCO members and orders the drafting of a synthetic report by the vice-dean/vice-deans, which he/she submits to the CF for analysis and decision making.
- The CF, on the same session or in different sessions, as the case may be, approves the curriculum for the following academic year by vote.
- The Dean remits the curriculum and study modules approved by the CF under binding signature to the CA.
- Where appropriate, the CA members suggest changes and/or remit the documents to the Senate for validation.
- The Rector, *faculty Dean and department Manager* undertake responsibility, under binding signature, for the documents validated by the Senate.
- In agreement with these documents validated by the Senate, the Dean asks the department managers to check and, where appropriate, update the discipline descriptions.
- The teaching activity coordinator and department manager undertake responsibility, by binding signature, for the discipline descriptions of the following year.

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5.4. Assessment of the programmes of study

5.4.1. The internal assessment of the programmes of study is:

a) **Planned** (from time to time, in accordance with the ARACIS criteria):

- **for the licensing/accreditation/reaccreditation of the programme** by the licensing/accreditation body (ARACIS); (based on a self-assessment file drafted by a work team appointed by the dean from the faculty;
- **by the CEAC at faculty/university level**, on a yearly basis, in accordance with the CEAC Regulations, which drafts a CEAC report at faculty/university level.

b) **Unplanned:**

- when requested by the licensing/accreditation body;
- when requested by the department/faculty/University management.

If the internal assessment of the study programmes is carried out for the **licensing / accreditation / re-accreditation of the programme** by the licensing / accreditation body or is carried out at the request of the licensing / accreditation body, it is followed by an external assessment.

The analyses carried out at department and faculty level for the implementation of corrective and preventive measures rely on the records collected after the monitoring and assessment of the study programmes.


The University CEAC drafts a synthetic report each year on the quality of the study programmes in the University, subject to the analysis of the Management Board and the Senate.

Where appropriate, based on the dean’s proposal and on the assessment of the study programmes, the University Senate may order the winding-up or temporary cessation of the nonperforming study programmes, on a proposal by the Faculty Council and by the Management Board.

5.4.2. External assessment of the programmes of study

According to the ARACIS Guidelines concerning the Quality Assessment of Academic Programmes of Study and of Higher Education Institutions, the external assessment of the academic quality is carried out in the following cases:

- a) for the provisional operation licensing of a programme of study (program licensing) or of a higher education provider (institution licensing)
- b) for the accreditation of a programme of study (program accreditation) or of a higher education institution (institution accreditation)
- c) for regular certification, every five years, of the academic quality of the education and research services in an accredited university.

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The external assessment of new programmes of study is done by ARACIS or another agency registered in the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and is conducted under the international law and standards in the field.


6. DUTIES

6.1. Duties of the Department Manager

- appoints, together with the faculty Dean, the work team in charge of drafting the documentation for the initiation of the new programme of study;
- initiates planned analyses (monitoring) of specific study programme results and activities;
- files study programme improvement proposals;
- urges the teaching activity coordinators to submit curriculum change proposals, like for instance: no. of hours / discipline, no. of credits, name of study discipline, new disciplines, *year of study*;
- analyses the curriculum change proposals received from the teaching activity coordinators, together with the Department Council members, where appropriate, decides on the changes and sends them to the faculty Dean;
- undertakes responsibility, under binding signature, for the discipline descriptions for the following academic year.

6.2. Duties of the Faculty Dean

- proposes, in agreement with the vice-rector in charge of the teaching activities, the initiation of a new bachelor's degree programme of study during a CA meeting;
- appoints, together with the department managers, the work team in charge of drafting the documentation for the pilot project of initiation of a new programme of study;
- after the documentation is finalized, asks for a BCF consultation;
- decides, within the BCO, on the composition of the work team and contact persons in charge of drafting the self-assessment file;
- sends to the Management Board the request to initiate the external assessment procedure by ARACIS of the new study programme;
- initiates planned analyses (monitoring) of specific study programme results and activities;
- files study programme improvement proposals;
- urges the department manager to submit curriculum change proposals, like for instance: no. of hours / discipline, no. of credits, name of study discipline, new disciplines;
- convenes the BCF members to analyse the curriculum change proposals;
- analyses the conclusions together with the BCO members and submits them to the *CF* for analysis and decision making;
- undertakes responsibility for, under binding signature, and remits the curriculum and study modules approved by the *CF* to the vice-rector in charge of the teaching activities, who makes them public during a CA meeting;
- urges department managers to check and, where appropriate, update discipline descriptions.

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6.3. Duties of the work team

- drafts the documentation for the pilot project of initiation of a new programme of study;
- puts together the self-assessment file for ARACIS accreditation.

6.4. Duties of the teaching activity coordinators

- sends the curriculum change proposals to the department manager;
- drafts and undertakes responsibility, under binding signature, for the discipline descriptions for the following academic year.

6.5. Duties of the BCF members

- at the Dean’s request, analyses the specific documentation of initiation of a new programme of study;
- files study programme improvement proposals;
- analyse the curriculum change proposals in compliance with the faculty’s and university’s education strategy and found the conclusions of their analysis in a BCF meeting minutes and/or in a synthetic document, where appropriate.

6.6. Duties of the BCO members

- analyse the study programme grounding project;
- endorse the curriculum improvement proposals filed by the department manager/ dean/ BCF members

6.7. Duties of the CF members


- analyse the study programme grounding project;
- analyse and decide on the curriculum change proposals at faculty level;
- approve, by vote, the curriculum for the following academic year.

6.8. Duties of the vice-rector in charge of teaching activities

- proposes, in agreement with the faculty Dean, the initiation of a new bachelor’s degree programme of study, during a CA meeting;
- initiates planned analyses (monitoring) of specific study programme results and activities;
- files study programme improvement proposals;
- during the CA meeting, presents the curriculum and study modules;
- coordinates and organizes the whole process of initiation and implementation of a new master’s degree programme of study.

6.9. Duties of the members of the Academic Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee (according to CEAC Regulations)

- conduct the internal assessment of the programmes of study;
- monitor the **implementation of performance indicators as measurement instruments** of compliance with the requirements defined by standards and reference standards and of the achievement of the target values described by them;
- draft the annual **Internal Assessment Report**;
- file **education quality improvement proposals**

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6.10. Duties of the members of the Management Board

- *appoint the team nominated by the Dean for drafting the specific documentation within the initiating faculties;*
- analyse the study programme grounding project;
- decide on the appropriateness of the initiation of the programme of study and order the putting together of the self-assessment file for ARACIS accreditation;
- express an opinion on the request of initiation of an external assessment by ARACIS sent by the Dean of the initiating faculty;
- approve the study programme improvement proposals made by the dean and endorsed by the BCO;
- endorse the winding-up or temporary cessation of the nonperforming study programmes.

6.11. Duties of the Senate members

- approve the request of external assessment by ARACIS, sent by the faculty Dean and endorsed by the CA;
- approve the organization of a programme of study;
- order the winding-up or temporary cessation of the nonperforming study programmes.

6.12. Duties of the Rector

- sends to ARACIS the external assessment request for the licensing /accreditation of the new programme of study, together with the whole self-assessment file;
- initiates planned analyses (monitoring) of specific study programme results and activities;
- undertakes responsibility, under binding signature, for the documents validated by the Senate;
- *issues decisions in accordance with the resolutions of the Management Board and of the University Senate, respectively.*

7. RECORDS AND APPENDICES


The forms in the External Assessment Methodology, standards, reference standards and performance indicators list of ARACIS shall be used.

The forms sent by the international assessment body/bodies, registered in the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) shall be used and the procedure shall be carried out under the international standards and laws in the field.

Study programme assessment report (file) – for accreditation

Documents of a programme of study:

- Curriculum
- Discipline descriptions
- Skills *acquired by the graduates*

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Supporting appendices to the ARACIS visit report

1. Curriculum
2. Abstract of qualification description within RNCIS
3. Coverage of vacant positions by teaching staff
4. Teaching staff records (list and table concerning compliance with the teaching staff competence indicator)
5. Students records (on years of study)
6. Scientific research (only research topics in the scientific research contracts in the current calendar year and over the previous 3 years)
7. Comprehensive records concerning the teaching facilities and equipment
8. *Other appendices requested by the assessing body*

CEAC report