



***Quality assurance a tool for cooperation
in HE and for fulfilling the threefold
mission of the HEIs: A case study of the
Romanian approach. Reflections on the
Past, and the Prospects for the Future***

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“A UNIVERSITY should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

1. QA in HE – Challenges in a dynamic HE environment

2. Study case – QA in Romania

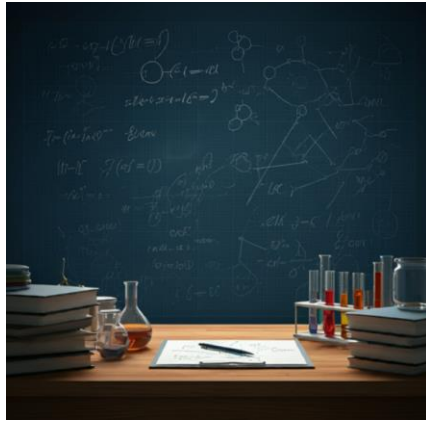
– Brief history

– The evolution of the Romanian QA system

- External QA indicators vs Romanian universities fundamental objectives

3. Conclusions

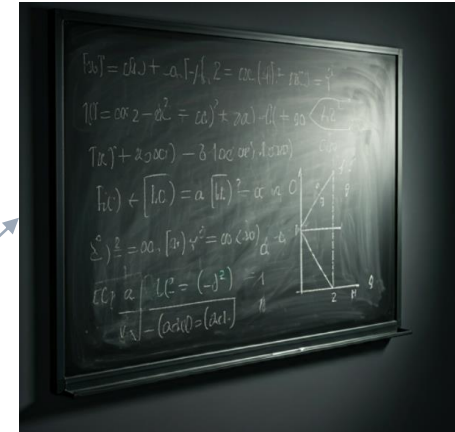




Research



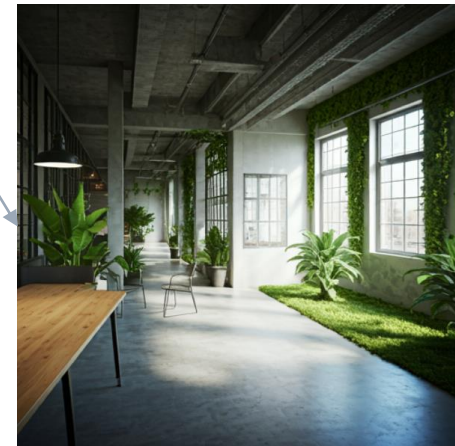
University



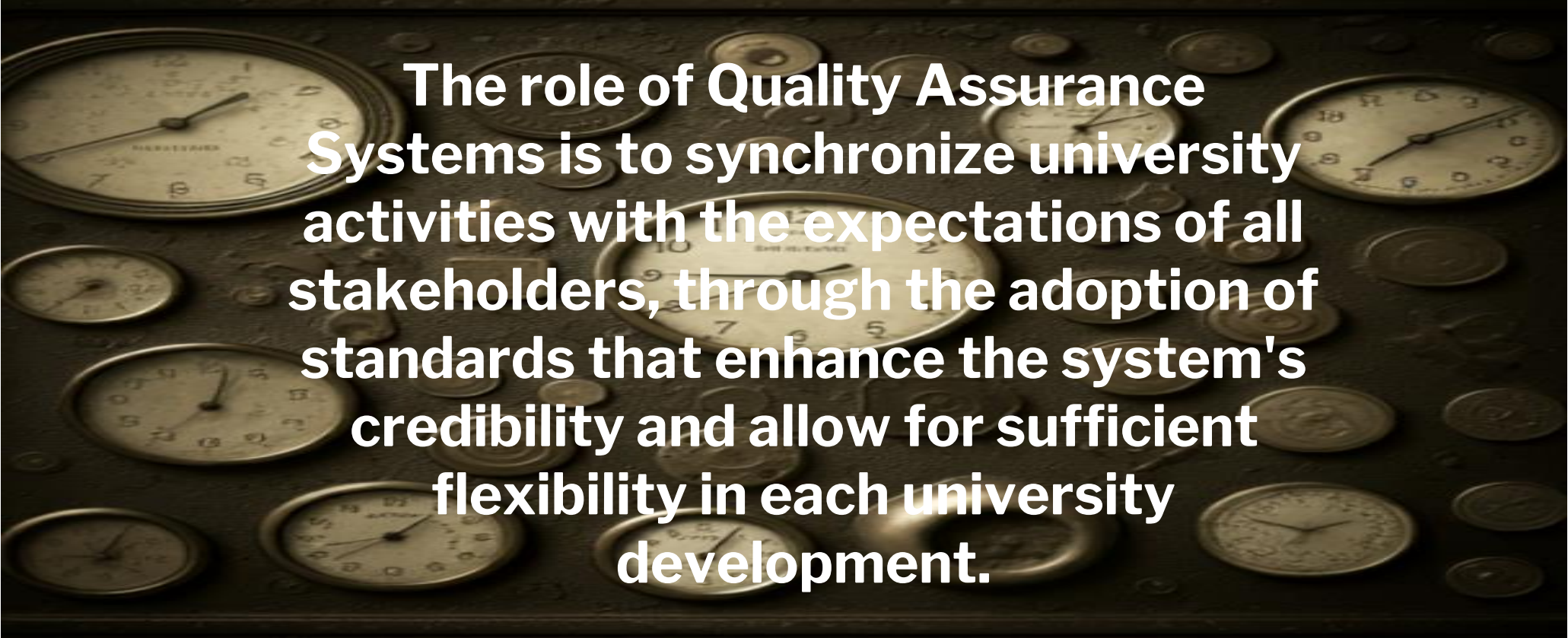
Education



Society needs



Sustainability



The role of Quality Assurance Systems is to synchronize university activities with the expectations of all stakeholders, through the adoption of standards that enhance the system's credibility and allow for sufficient flexibility in each university development.

Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Romania

1993 - the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (CNEAA)

- accreditation of bachelor programmes and universities

2005 - the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)

- test, on the basis of quality standards, the ability of the education providers to meet the expectations of the beneficiaries;

- contribute to the development of an institutional culture of the quality of higher education;

- ensure the protection of the direct beneficiaries of higher education study programmes by producing and disseminating systematic, coherent and credible, publicly accessible information about the quality of education;

- propose to the Ministry of National Education strategies and policies for permanent improvement of the quality of higher education, in close correlation with the pre-university education

Legislative Framework for QA in HE in Romania

Law of National Education no. 1/2011 with subsequent amendments

Law of Higher Education no 199/2023 with subsequent amendments

Emergency Ordinance no. 75 of July 12, 2005 on the education quality assurance with subsequent amendments

The External evaluation methodology, standards, reference standards and the list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – October 2006, December 2017, August 2024 (in place from February 2025)

ARACIS Guidelines for different types of external evaluations

Specific standards for each field of study

External evaluations provided in the Romanian Higher Education system:

- Evaluation and accreditation of bachelor's degree programmes;
- Evaluation and accreditation of master's degree fields of study;
- Evaluation of doctoral education;
- Evaluation of post-university programmes;
- Evaluation of psycho-pedagogical training programmes for the teaching profession (DPPD);
- Evaluation of preparatory programmes for foreign students;
- Institutional classification (*which determines funding from the state budget*);
- Ranking of programmes;
- Evaluation of research;
- Audit of different managerial practices: such as ethics, financing, promotion in the teaching career etc.

External Quality
Assurance processes

Rankings

Students needs

Internal Quality
Assurance processes

Mission and values
of the university

Employers needs

New challenges in HE:
SDG, European
Universities etc.

Financial
restrictions



SUSTENABILITY

Analysis of the Indicators included in the three main methodologies

Type of indicator	Percentage in the 2006 Methodology	Percentage in the 2017 Methodology	Percentage in the 2024 Methodology
INPUT	60%	30%	5.5%
PROCESS/SYSTEM	30%	54%	89%
OUTPUT/OUTCOME	10%	16%	5.5%

Analysis of the Indicators included in the three main methodologies

Type of indicator	Percentage in the 2006 Methodology	Percentage in the 2017 Methodology	Percentage in the 2024 Methodology
Prescriptive	60%	40%	36%
Flexible	40%	60%	64%

Analysis of the Indicators included in the three main methodologies

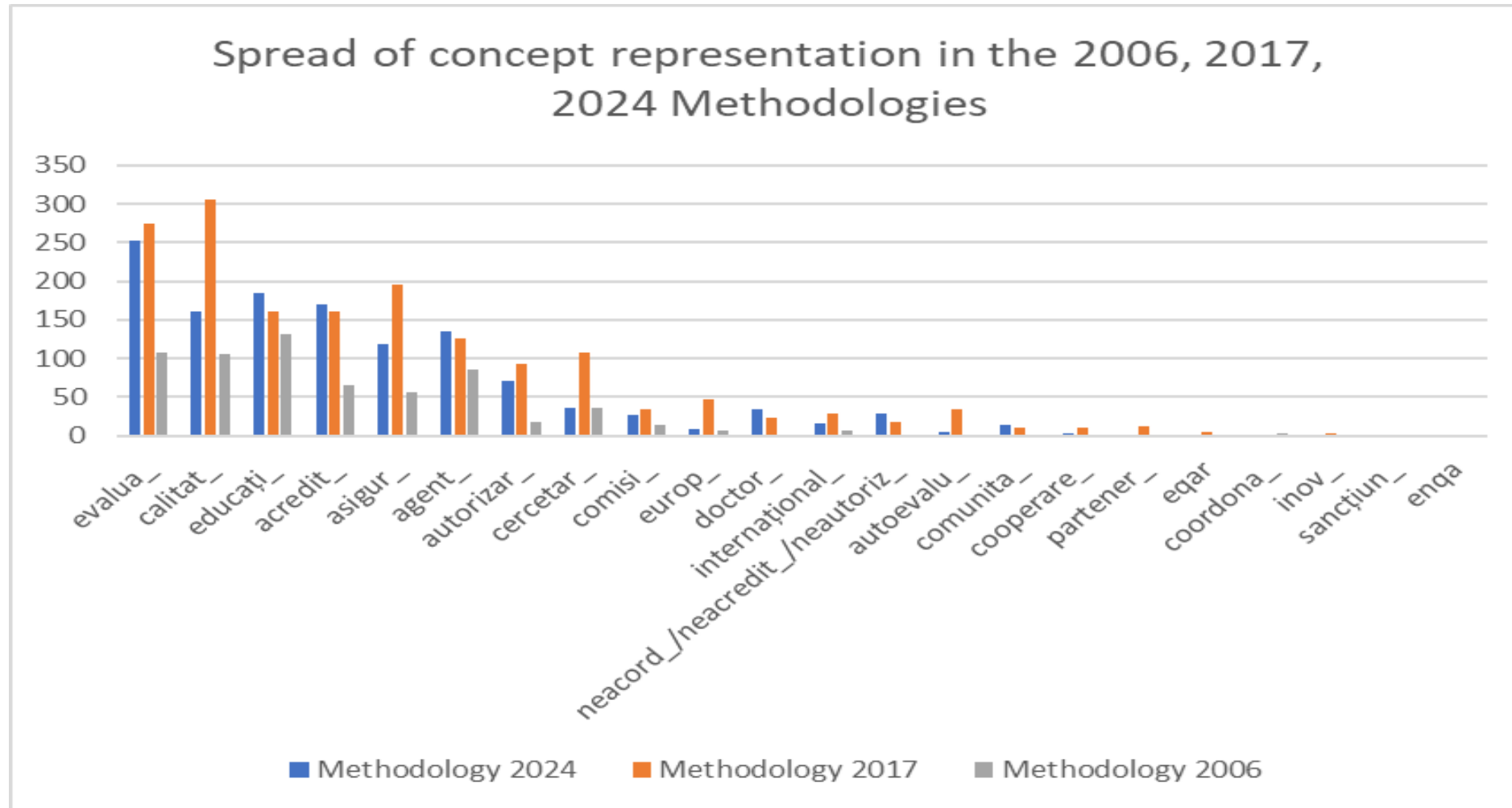
Type of indicator	Percentage in the 2006 Methodology	Percentage in the 2017 Methodology	Percentage in the 2024 Methodology
Simple/direct	28%	50%	73%
Complex	72%	50%	27%

Thematic/ content analysis of the 2006-2024 methodologies

Theme	Count in 2006 Methodology	Count in 2017 Methodology	Count in 2024 Methodology	Dictionary Element (EN)
1 cooperation	N=0	N=1	N=3	Cooperation, International, Collaboration, <u>European</u> , alliance, joint
2 <u>education</u>	N=2	N=12	N=17	Flexible, learning, mobility, credentials, study, education, academic, didactic, curriculum
3 research	N=	N=10	N=26	Research, project, conference, publish, article, journal, doctoral
4 <u>impact</u> for community	N=0	N=0	N=2	Community, society
5 dual <u>education</u>	N=0	N=0	N=1	Dual
6 vocational <u>education</u>	N=0	N=0	N=1	Vocational
7 <u>euopean</u> approach for joint programmes	N=0	N=0	N=2	Approach, integrated

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Thematic/ content analysis of the 2006-2024 methodologies



Romanian universities fundamental objectives

- the development of national education, science and culture;
- the capitalization and dissemination of the values of human culture and civilization;
- the promotion of the right to free speech, critical thinking, scientific opinions, renewal and enrichment of knowledge;
- the training and development of qualified and highly qualified human resources;
- the participation of Romanian science to the development of European and universal science and culture;
- the promotion of the national cultural identity and participation to the process of European integration;
- the development of Romanian society in a free and democratic rule of law.

Conclusions:

- the new ARACIS external evaluation methodology introduces a set of **indicators that provide universities with greater flexibility in their approach**, depending on their institutional strategy and proposed objectives;
- is a notable **shift in the balance of indicator types**; previously, input indicators predominated, but the focus is now shifting towards process and outcome indicators; this shift reflects the natural evolution and maturation of internal quality assurance systems;
- the new ARACIS methodology strikes a balance between standardised indicators that ensure consistency and comparability across institutions, and flexible indicators tailored to the specific contexts of individual HEIs;
- **the new methodology supports and respects the internationalisation of Romanian universities**, aligning with the European Approach to Quality Assurance for Joint Programs;
- **still a large number of external evaluations required by Romanian legislation, which can sometimes complicate compliance.**

We asked AI to generate a suggestive image considering the balance between external quality assurance and university autonomy



Subject of
reflection 😊

Reflections on the Past, and the Prospects for the Future



**Thank you for your
attention!**

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