Responsible bodies

According to the Romanian legislation, the Ministry of National Education has the responsibility to evaluate both the education system and the educational process, according to national standards and through specialised institutions.

Evaluation of the education system and of the educational process has an internal component – entirely performed at the level of the educational institution, and an external component – performed by the following bodies:

- The County School Inspectorates for the evaluation of the educational process in pre-academic education.

- The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-academic Education (ARACIP) for the institutional evaluation of pre-academic education institutions.

- The Ministry of National Education for the evaluation of the entire education system.

Approaches and methods for quality assurance

The main purpose of the evaluation performed at various levels is to improve the quality of the system and of the education and training provided. In this respect, besides the diagnosis dimension, the evaluation has also an important supportive dimension – being considered as the main modality to assess the existing problems and to plan and carry out amelioration measures. This applies to the level of the educational institutions, to the local level and to the national level. In order to become the basis for the educational policy at various levels, all the evaluation processes are materialised through detailed reports on every aspect evaluated.

The evaluation reports are aggregated from the level of the educational institutions up to the national level through the bodies responsible with the external evaluations. At the end of each school year the General School Inspector draws up a report on the status of education in the respective county. The report is sent to the Ministry of National Education, the Prefect, the County Council, the Local Councils and is made public for all the educational institutions located in the county. The information collected from the reports elaborated at the County School Inspectorates level, as well as the evaluation reports of the ARACIP and ARACIS are analyzed at the level of the General Directorates of the Ministry of National Education. Finally, the Ministry of National Education elaborates the annual report on the status of education and training in Romania and submit it to the Parliament. The annual national report becomes the basis for the planning in the education and training sector for the next year and it also constitutes an instrument in establishing the
medium- and long-term strategies of the Ministry of National Education.

Additionally to the national evaluation system, Romania participates to the international surveys PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS. The findings from these surveys are interpreted within the concrete context of the Romanian education system and further used in the educational policy. Moreover, starting 1995, Romania conducted several internal surveys on the grade IV pupils in order to assess the quality of the education provided during primary education. Besides the results of the national and international surveys, the overall results of the pupils to the national final exams at the end of grade VIII and at the end of high school constitute major reference points in the overall evaluation of the educational process.

**Evaluation of Schools/Institutions**

The management of the whole system of pre-university evaluation is the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education. The evaluation is conducted by its representatives: bodies of inspectors from the Ministry of National Education or from County School Inspectorates and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-academic Education (ARACIP).

The Control Department within the Ministry of National Education is an administrative, financial control office for the activity of the school network as well as the personnel of the ministry itself. The control activities may be ordered by the Ministry of National Education or the Control Department of the Government. The control structure contains two main sections: the administrative control and the financial control. The main responsibilities of the Control Department are:

- To submit legislative proposals, methodologies, reports, studies, researches, briefings, thematic planning and control graphics, questionnaires, examination subjects and evaluation criteria.

- To inform the ministry on exceptional circumstances and events occurred in schools.

- To organize and monitor the educational activities as well as the activities performed by the inspectors of the Ministry of National Education.

- To organize the in-service training of the inspectors from the Control Department.

- To coordinate the implementation of the reform and development strategies, as well as all control activities over the subordinate units.

- To analyze the management of the exceptional events or situations occurred in schools on a regular basis.

- To analyse the compliance of the subordinated bodies with the tasks and duties formulated by the previous inspections on a regular basis.

The Law 87/2006 established the ARACIP, and specified the general objectives of the evaluation carried out by sub-commissions of experts:

- To ensure that minimum quality standards, set up at national level, are achieved in all evaluated
schools.

- To offer equal opportunities for increasing the quality of education provided in all schools.

ARACIP has also other responsibilities related to the school evaluation as:

- elaborates, brings up to date and suggests the Ministry of National Education the reference standards and the quality standards for the evaluation and quality assurance in pre-acaemic education, as well as the institutional evaluation methodology approved by Government Decision;

- realizes the evaluation and the accreditation of education providers in pre-university education.

- suggests the Ministry of National Education the foundation accreditation of education institutions in pre-acaemic education, for each level, study programme and vocational qualification, depending on the case. The foundation and accreditation are approved by an order of the Ministry of National Education.

- realizes, based on contracts and upon the request of the Ministry of National Education, the quality evaluation in pre-academic education.

- suggests the Ministry of National Education the accreditation of the organizations which provide vocational training programmes.

- realises, together with the school inspectorates and the resort divisions of the Ministry of National Education, the monitoring and the quality control.

- realizes, at least once every 3 years, the evaluation of the accredited education institutions.

- elaborates textbooks for internal evaluation and good practice guides.

- elaborates periodically, at least once every 4 years, system analysis regarding the quality of pre-academic education in Romania and recommendations for the improvement of the quality of pre-academic education.

Pre-academic education, including schools of all levels, extra-school activities and auxiliary units, is subordinated to the Ministry of National Education through the County School Inspectorates – acting as local (county) level decentralised specialised bodies. The County School Inspectorates have, among other attributions, the main role to ensure quality of the education and observance of the national standards through the school inspection. Following the evaluations of the schools, County School Inspectorates elaborate annual evaluations reports on the county level education system. Based on this evaluation and the national educational policy, establishes the management plan for the next school year, detailing objectives, activities, resources and responsibilities.
**Internal Evaluation**

Main objectives of school internal evaluation are related to the provision of necessary information for monitoring the school’s whole activity and for external evaluation. School internal evaluation is intended to validate the school as a corporate entity. A commission for evaluation and quality assurance is set up in each educational institution, which elaborates and implements the strategy for quality assurance and the regulation for the functioning of this commission.

The recommended criteria used for school internal evaluation are those included into the National Inspection Model applied by inspectors coming from County School Inspectorates or from the Ministry of National Education, who carry out external evaluations. However, schools may decide to use other criteria in addition – depending on their specific needs. All the schools have to evaluate their activities regarding school development, educational programmes, curricular and extra-curricular activities, and the quality of the teaching-learning process, human resources development, community relationship and European dimension in education annually.

There are no standard procedures for the internal evaluation. However, the most used procedures for the evaluation of the teaching-learning process may include: visits to classes and observation of lessons (minimum 120 lessons assisted per school year), analysis of pupils’ work and results, examination of planning documents (annual and semester planning of subjects, lesson plans) elaborated by the teachers. The heads of schools also gather information through meetings with the teaching staff, meetings with parents, examination of administrative and financial documents. They also use the last inspection reports and statistics about the context in which schools carry out their activities.

Internal evaluation results are used at the school level by the head of school and the administration council for analysing the quality of educational and administrative activities and making decisions concerning the objectives of the educational policy and institutional development. At local authorities level the results are used by the Local Councils for making decision concerning schools’ financing, and by the County School Inspectorate for producing diagnosis and prognosis studies, as well as the annual report on the status of education in the county. Internal evaluations are also used in order to support external evaluations.

**External Evaluation**

External evaluation of pre-academic institutions is carried-out by County School Inspectorates and by Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-academic Education (ARACIP).

**Evaluation carried out by County School Inspectorate**

Pre-academic education, including schools of all levels, extra-school activities and auxiliary units, is subordinated to the Ministry of National Education through the County School Inspectorates acting as local (county) level decentralised specialised bodies. All pre-academic education institutions are evaluated on a regular basis by school inspectors regarding the educational process.

The school inspections are mainly performed by the inspectors of the County School Inspectorates. On certain occasions, inspectors of the Ministry of National Education may perform school inspections - as part of the evaluation of the County School Inspectorates activity or in order to elucidate complaints registered with the Ministry of National Education. The objectives of school inspections and the procedures, rules and regulations that govern the school inspections are established through ministerial order.

The school inspection has the following main purposes:

- To support schools and teaching staff to improve education and training activities.
To support evaluation of the quality of the educational offer and the school performances of the students – at local, county and national level – by providing accurate information to the decision makers through the inspections reports. Schools to be inspected are chosen by the County School Inspectorate at the beginning of each semester, on the basis of the conclusions included in the last inspection report and the overall performance of the school.

Inspections can be:

- **Full inspection**, which evaluates the whole activity of the school.

- **Thematic inspection**, which evaluates a range of topics related to the activity of the school (aspects to be inspected are decided either at county level or at national level). The main objective of thematic inspections is related to the stage of implementation of different legislative initiatives adopted by the Ministry of National Education.

- **Special inspections** as part of the individual teachers’ evaluations for obtaining on-the-job-confirmation and didactic grades.

In both full inspection and thematic inspection, the school is evaluated as a corporate entity. School inspectors must report both on educational and administrative tasks performed by the school. During a school inspection, the inspectors focus on all or part of the following aspects:

- The school performances of the students in comparison to the national educational standards.

- The school’s methods to encourage and support students’ personal development.

- The quality of the teaching staff activities.

- The quality of the management and the efficiency in using the resources.

- The quality of the curriculum, the quality of the extra-curricular activities and the ability of the school to implement the national and the school-based curriculum.

- School-parents relationship.

- School-local community relationship.

- Compliance with the in-force legislation, procedures, rules and regulations.

- Students’ attitude towards the education offered by the school.
During the school inspections, as well as in their entire activity, the inspectors have to strictly obey to a specific set of rules of conduct.

Usually a school inspection is conducted of a team of 2 to 8 inspectors of which one is nominated by the General School Inspector as the coordinator. The inspection team must possess the necessary competencies for evaluating school educational tasks (at least six subjects, including the Romanian language, mathematics and sciences) and school administrative tasks. According to the size of the school and the aspects envisaged, a school inspection can take up to 5 working days. If necessary, the inspectors can conduct sociological enquires in order to collect specific information on certain subjects and/or aspects from the school’s life.

The main phases of a school inspection are as follows:

- Selection of the school, establishment of the objectives of the inspection and nomination of the inspection team.

- Pre-inspection activities:
  - in school: meetings of the inspection team coordinator with the head of school and the teachers’ council to inform on and to plan the inspection
  - in County School Inspectorate: meetings of the inspection team to establish roles and to plan the activities.

- Inspection activities:
  - analysis of school’s documents
  - observation of lessons (55% - 65% of the total time spent in school by the inspection team)
  - group discussions (personnel, parents, students)
  - regular meetings of the inspectors.

- Post-inspection activities:
  - Oral report of the inspection team coordinator to the head of school, heads of department and inspected teachers on the preliminary results of the inspection.
  - Written report of the inspection team on the results of the inspection.
  - Oral report of the head of school to the administration council and the parents, based on the inspection’s written report.
Improvement plan elaborated by the head of school and approved by the inspection team coordinator.

Implementation of the improvement plan.

In order to establish the results of the inspection, the inspection team uses a 1 to 5 rating scale, with 1 for very good and 5 for very poor. On each inspected aspect the inspection team applies national evaluation standards detailed in descriptors for the ratings good, acceptable and poor. The in-between ratings are at the decision of the inspection team. The improvement plan to be elaborated by the head of school following the results of the inspection has to focus on all inspected aspects, but mainly on the aspects ranked poor or very poor. Monitoring of the implementation of the improvement plan is usually performed by the inspector in charge of the given school (not necessarily the inspection team coordinator). Occasionally, for schools with very poor results for most of the inspected aspects, the general inspector or one of the deputy general inspectors can monitor the implementation of the improvement plan.

The quality assurance system of the school inspection is based on four pillars:

- Compliance with the established procedures, rules and regulations
- Well trained inspectors
- Local monitoring and evaluation
- National monitoring and evaluation.

National level monitoring and evaluation is performed by the inspectors of the Ministry of National Education and involves feedback reports from the inspected schools. Schools with excellent performances on all inspected aspects can be nominated by the minister of education as an example of good practice nationwide. Schools with very poor results can be included in local and/or national improvement and development plans in order to correct the existing situation. Schools with results below the minimum national standards, noticed in the last full inspection, are included in a special inspection programme, conceived and implemented both by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and by the County School Inspectorate concerned. Inspectors involved in this plan are designated to provide a long term support and assistance.

Evaluation carried out by ARACIP

According to the Government Ordinance 75/2005, ARACIP has in its structure 2 departments – the Department for Accreditation and the Department for External Quality Evaluation, as well as other services and operational compartments. ARACIP is led by a president, designated by the Ministry of National Education.

For the external evaluation, ARACIP uses external collaborators, experts in evaluation and accreditation, registered in the Register of experts for evaluation and accreditation, selected according to the provisions of the Order of the Ministry of National Education no. 5338/2006 regarding the approval of the Methodology regarding the selection and training criteria of the experts registered in the ARACIP Register of experts for evaluation and accreditation, as well as the Training Programme of experts for evaluation and accreditation of ARACIP.
Each new founded education institution will be submitted to an evaluation procedure in two stages: the temporary authorisation and the accreditation. According to the law, the accreditation implies the following two phases:

- The authorisation for temporary functioning, which gives the right for deployment of the education process and to organize, if needed, the study admission;

- The accreditation, which gives the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of National Education and to organize, if needed, a graduation exam.

The accreditation of the education institutions also certifies that the education processes, especially the teaching-learning processes, respect the legal provisions, and the learning outcomes are the ones expected and respect, at the same time, the national curriculum frameworks and standards. The accredited institutions submit to a periodical evaluation every 5 years. The purpose of this evaluation is to check if the education institution maintains the level of the national accreditation standards. Therefore, the periodical evaluation is equivalent to a re-accreditation. The external evaluation procedures for accreditation and periodical evaluation of the education institutions are deployed according to the provisions of the Government Decision no. 22/2007 for the approval of the Methodology of institutional evaluation for authorisation, accreditation and periodical evaluation of the education institutions.

**Evaluation of the Education System**

The overall evaluation of the national education system in Romania is performed annually by the Ministry of National Education. The main purpose of the evaluation performed at various levels is to improve the quality of the system and of the education and training provided. In this respect, besides the diagnosis dimension, the evaluation has also an important supportive dimension – being considered as the main modality to assess the existing problems and to plan and carry out corrective measures. This applies to the level of the educational institutions, to the local level and to the national level. In order to become the basis for the educational policy at various levels, all the evaluation processes are materialized through detailed reports on every aspect evaluated.

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