

Decision on the Application of the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in the area of Health and Social Affairs (AHPGS e.V.)

(resolved on 03. March 2009)

I.

The Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (Accreditation Council), as per § 2 para. 1 no. 1 of the German Statute for the Establishment of a Foundation "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany", accredits the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in the area of Health and Social Affairs (AHPGS e.V.) subject to the following regulations and thus grants it the right in this respect to accredit study programmes and quality assurance systems internal to the Higher Education Institution by awarding the seal of the Accreditation Council.

II.

The resolution as per item I above comes into effect on 03.03.2009.

III.

The accreditation and the right as per item I. above are granted for a duration of five years; the revocation as per item V. below is reserved. As per § 2 para. 1 sentence 2 of the resolution "Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Effects" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 29.02.2008, the accreditation lapses on 31.12.2014. If ENQA should decide by 31.12.2009, that according to general European standards an accreditation is permitted for a period longer than five years, then the accreditation period gets extended up to the maximum period permitted according to general European standards, but at the most by another three years.

IV.

The Accreditation Council has determined that AHPGS does not fulfil some quality requirements; however these quality requirements are not significant as per § 1 para. 3 of the resolution "Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Effects" of 15.12.2005 in

the version of 29.02.2008. The accreditation is therefore granted subject to compliance with the following conditions:

Condition 1

The AHPGS shall document the adoption of a binding resolution pertaining to the periods of office of the organs (criterion 2.2.) before 31.10.2009. *

Condition 2

The AHPGS shall document the expansion of the accreditation commission by at least one suitable expert in the area of economics (criterion 2.3) by 31.10.2009. *

Condition 3

The AHPGS shall document a suitable procedure for assessing the impartiality of experts by 31.10.2009, whereby the responsibility for the decision on possible partiality must lie with the agency (criterion 2.4.). *

Condition 4

The AHPGS shall submit by 31.10.2009 the adoption of a binding resolution pertaining to the systematisation of the internal quality management, which includes feedback processes as well as ensures the analysis and reflection of its own processes (criterion 5).*

Condition 5

The AHPGS shall document by 31.10.2009 the adoption of a binding resolution pertaining to a complaints procedure that regulates periods and procedures explicitly. The decision on complaints of Higher Education Institutions should not rest with the Executive Board as long as it has been involved directly in accreditation procedures. *

* Condition fulfilled

V.

If the AHPGS does not prove having fulfilled these conditions within the respective time limit or if the conditions are not fulfilled after expiry of the respective time limit, then the Accreditation Council can revoke the accreditation as per § 7 para. 2 of the resolution

"Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Effects" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 29.02.2008.

VI. Reasons

General:

On the basis of the experts' report, the report on the submitted documentation of procedures and the hearing, the Accreditation Council has come to the conclusion that the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in the area of Health and Social Affairs (AHPGS e.V.) essentially meets the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007.

The Accreditation Council has received a very positive impression of the work of the AHPGS e.V. The agency sees itself as a partner of the Higher Education Institutions in the professionalisation in the field "health and social affairs" and its treatment as an academic discipline. The accreditation procedures are carried out under application of the appropriate criteria and specifications of the Accreditation Council. In this process the agency pays special attention to the consideration of gender mainstreaming and the interests of students with handicaps or chronic diseases.

The Accreditation Council has come to the conclusion that the shortcomings diagnosed in certain areas can be remedied in a period of not more than 18 months.

Ref. Condition 1:

As per criterion 2.2 of "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007, the responsibilities and composition of the organs must be regulated correspondingly. This is also the case with the AHPGS e.V. However, the stipulation of the terms of office of the organs is missing in the current constitution.

Ref. Condition 2:

As per criterion 2.3 of "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007, the agencies must ensure the competency of those involved in the procedure by an appropriate selection or preparation procedure. It was stated in the expert report, that the AHPGS accredits also study programmes at the periphery of or outside its own professional area of health and social affairs. As can be

seen, for example, in the activity report 2007 it mainly involves business management study programmes. At present, this is not reflected in the professional composition of the accreditation commission.

Ref. Condition 3:

As per criterion 2.4 of "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007, the agency must ensure the independence and impartiality of the experts acting for the agency.

The impartiality declaration of AHPGS e.V. for experts (Annexure 3.2.4 of the application) ends with the question: "In case you have answered one or more questions with yes, can you ensure that in this matter there is no bias on your side as an expert?" This gives the impression that the decision, whether experts are biased in a specific case, is left to the persons in question. The regulations for avoiding conflicts of interest should be formulated more precisely. It should be clear also in the external presentation that as per criterion 2.3 the agency takes the decision, whether there are indications of partiality.

Ref. Condition 4:

As per criterion 5 of "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007, the agencies use a formalised internal quality management, which covers particularly systematic internal and external feedback processes.

The expert report stated that, although some instruments of an internal quality management are regularly used in practice at the AHPGS, however no formalised system of internal quality management is perceivable.

Ref. Condition 5:

As per criterion 6 of "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 in the version of 08.10.2007, the agencies have to show a formalised internal procedure for assessment of accreditation decisions on application from a Higher Education Institution, which defines the object to be assessed.

The "complaints procedure of the AHPGS" submitted by the AHPGS admittedly grants Higher Education Institutions the possibility of lodging a complaint substantiated in writing within two weeks of receipt of a decision of the accreditation commission. But neither procedures nor time limits of how the accreditation commission decides on the complaint are defined.

Even with respect to the possibility, contained in the resolution "Complaints Procedure of the AHPGS", to submit a complaint to the Executive Board of the AHPGS, specifications of procedures and time limits are missing.

VII. Compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the membership criteria of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA)

The Accreditation Council has determined that the AHPGS meets the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the membership criteria of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA). However, ESG 2.6.8 is only fulfilled for the most part, since "in the opinion of the experts, some instruments are available with respect to internal and external feedback processes and are used in practice. However, the experts cannot perceive any formalised system of internal quality management."

Differing from the vote of the expert group the Accreditation Council states:

- AHPGS fulfils ESG 2.6.1. Reason: The complaint regarding the complaints procedure stated by the experts refers to requirements from the criteria for the accreditation of accreditation agencies and not to the ESG.
- AHPGS fulfils ESG 2.6.6. Reason: Differing from the vote of the expert group, the Accreditation Council holds the measures of the agency to ensure the impartiality of the experts to be sufficient.
- AHPGS fulfils ESG 2.6.7. Reason: The complaint stated by the experts with regard to the term of office of the committee members of the agency refers to requirements from the criteria for the accreditation of accreditation agencies and not to the ESG.