

Drs. AR 36/2009

Resolution on the Application of the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (AQA) for Accreditation of 22.10.2008

Resolution of the Accreditation Council of 09.06.2009

I.

The Foundation for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (foundation) accredits , *the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (AQA)* as per § 2 para 1 no. 1 of the German Statute on the Establishment of a foundation 'Foundation for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany' subject to the following regulations and thus grants it the right in this respect to accredit internal quality assurance systems of Higher Education Institutions by awarding the Foundation's seal.

II.

The decision as per item I. comes into effect on 09.06.2009, however without retrospective effect because the agreement with the Foundation had not been concluded as per § 3 of the German Statute on the Establishment of a foundation 'Foundation for Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany' up to July 31, 2009.

III.

The accreditation and the right as per item I. above are granted for a duration of five years; the right to revocation as per item V. is reserved. As per § 2 Para 1 sentence 2 of the resolution "Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and effects" of 15.12.2005 amended on 29.02.2008, the accreditation will expire on 30.09.2014. If ENQA should decide by 31.12.2009 that according to general European standards, an accreditation with a period longer than five years is permitted, then the accreditation term 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 AQA does not fulfil some quality standards; these quality standards are not significant as per § 1 para 3 of the resolution "Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and effects" dated 15.12.2005 amended on 29.02.2008. The accreditation is therefore granted under the following conditions

Condition 1

AQA will provide "Guidelines for system accreditation" edited and revised by Monita of the expert group by beginning the accreditation activity, but no later than 01.09.2009, (see Criterion 1.4). The criteria and rules of procedure of the Accreditation Council for System Accreditation must be adopted explicitly for this purpose.

Condition 2

AQA will prove a binding resolution until 01.09.2009 that the expert group is appointed by the entire academic steering group and is not delegated (Criterion 2.2).

Condition 3

AQA will prove until 01.09.2009 that the academic steering group is either supplemented of practitioners from the profession and students or does no longer directly participate in the procedures of system accreditation (Criterion 2.2).

Condition 4

AQA will prove the composition of the appointment committee until 01.09.2009 (Criterion 6).

Condition 5

AQA will provide evidence of a binding resolution on terms and methods of the internal complaints procedure (Criterion 6) by 01.09.2009.

V.

If AQA does not prove the fulfilment of the conditions within the given respite or if the conditions show not to be fulfilled after the respite, the foundation can revoke the accreditation as per § 7 para 2 of the resolution "Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and effects" dated 15.12.2005 amended on 28.02.08.

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VI. Reasoning

General:

On the basis of the expert report and hearing, the Accreditation Council arrived at the opinion that the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (AQA) substantially meets the "Criteria for accreditation of accreditation agencies" dated 15.12.2005 amended on 08.10.2007.

The Accreditation Council has gained a very positive impression of the work done by AQA. Nevertheless, some defects have to be pointed out with regard to meeting the "Criteria for Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies", their rectifying is however possible in a period of at he most 18 months.

For condition 1:

In accordance with Criterion 1.4 of the "Criteria for Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" amended on 08.10.2007, the agency will provide evidence of internal procedures, regulations and expertise which ensure the application of "Criteria for System Accreditation" and the "General Rules for Implementation of Procedures of System Accreditation". The procedures of the agency for implementing system accreditation are basically adequate and regular. However, the Accreditation Council has identified more adjustment requirements in the revised "Guidelines of System Accreditation" (May 2009) of relevant rules of procedure and resolutions of the Accreditation Council and refers to the evaluations in the expert report on Criterion 1.4 for it.

For condition 2:

In accordance with Criterion 2.2 of the "Criteria for accreditation of accreditation agencies" dated 15.12.2005 amended on 08.10.2007, the agency has carried out all tasks relevant to the accreditation and regulated the responsibilities of its organs.

The practice of the agency to delegate the appointing of experts even to individual members of the academic steering contradicts the instruction mentioned in Criterion 2.2 on the adequate assignment of functions to organs in the accreditation procedure.

For condition 3:

In accordance with Criterion 2.2 of the "Criteria for accreditation of accreditation agencies" dated 15.12.2005 amended on 08.10.2007, the agency will involve relevant interest groups (including students and practitioners from the profession).

According to § 17 of the statutes, no students and practitioners from the profession have been represented in the academic steering group of the agency. The tasks of the academic steering group in the system accreditation procedures include, among others, the formal release of the procedure and appointment of the experts.

If the academic steering group is to continue assuming responsibilities in the system accreditation procedures students and practitioners from the profession must be represented in this organ.

For condition 4:

In accordance with Criterion 6 of the "Criteria for Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" amended on 08.10.2007, the agency will provide evidence of a formalised internal procedure for verification of accreditation decisions at the request of a higher education institution.

In § 19 of the agency's statutes, it is stipulated that an administrative panel of minimum three people will handle and decide on objections against certification and accreditation decisions. However, this panel has not been set up yet.

For condition 5:

In accordance with Criterion 6 of the "Criteria for Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" amended on 08.10.2007, the agency will provide evidence of a formalised internal procedure for assessment of accreditation decisions at the request of a higher education institution.

The regulations of the agency in § 19 of the statutes for the internal complaints procedure do not include terms and methods for handling and deciding on objections by higher education institutions currently.