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Regulation Amending the Lower Saxony Study Accreditation Regulation of September 29, 2025

Pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 through 4 and 6, also in conjunction with Article 17, paragraph 1, sentence 1, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of June 1 and 20, 2017 (Nds. GVBl. p. 290) in conjunction with Article 2 of the Act on the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of September 21, 2017 (Nds. GVBl. p. 290), the following is hereby enacted:

Article 1

The Lower Saxony Study Accreditation Ordinance of July 30, 2019 (Nds. GVBl. p. 220) is amended as follows:

1. Section 3 is amended as follows:
 - a) In the heading, a comma and the words “recognition and credit transfer” are inserted after the word “Duration of study.”
 - b) The following paragraph 4 is added:

“(4) The institution of higher education shall implement the national and state regulations regarding the recognition of competencies, qualifications, and academic achievements obtained at an institution of higher education, as well as the transfer of competencies and qualifications acquired outside of institutions of higher education.”
2. Section 4(1) is amended as follows:
 - a) Sentence 1 is replaced by the following:

“1Master’s programs can be distinguished by their ‘practice-oriented’ or ‘research-oriented’ profile.”
 - b) Sentence 4 is amended to read as follows:

“4If the institution establishes a profile in accordance with sentence 1 or 2, this must be specified in the accreditation.”
3. In § 5(1), sentence 2, the words “as a rule” are deleted, and after the word “require,” a semicolon and the words “exceptions are possible for individual students in justified exceptional cases” are inserted.

4. Section 7 is amended as follows:
 - a) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:
 - aa) In sentence 1, the words “intended learning outcomes and” are inserted after the word “of.”
 - bb) In sentence 2, the word “content” is replaced by the words “intended learning outcomes and course content.”
 - b) Paragraph 2 is amended as follows:
 - aa) Item 1 is amended to read as follows:

“1. intended learning outcomes and course content of the module,”
 - bb) Number 4 is deleted.
 - cc) The current paragraphs 5 through 9 shall become paragraphs 4 through 8.
 - c) Paragraph 3 is amended as follows:
 - aa) Sentence 2 is deleted.
 - bb) The current sentence 3 becomes sentence 2.
5. Section 10 is amended as follows:
 - a) In the heading, the words “Joint-Degree-Programmes” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes”.
 - b) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:
 - aa) The existing text becomes sentence 1, and in it, the words “Joint-Degree-Program” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes,” and after the word “degree,” the words “(Joint Degree) or a double or multiple degree” are inserted.
 - bb) The following sentences 2 and 3 are added:

“2Sections 10, 16, and 33 apply to these degree programs. 3Compliance with the criteria set forth in paragraph 2, items 1 through 5, shall be reviewed.”
 - c) The following sentence 6 is added to paragraph 2:

“6In all other respects, the provisions of Part 2 do not apply.”
 - d) In paragraph 3, sentence 1, the words “Joint-Degree-Programm” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes.”
6. Section 11 is amended as follows:
 - a) In paragraph 1, sentence 1, a comma and the words “publicly accessible” are inserted after the word “formulated.”
 - b) In paragraph 3, sentence 1, the words “or artistic” are inserted after the words “broad scientific.”
7. Section 12 is amended as follows:
 - a) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:
 - aa) In sentence 3, the words “teaching and learning methods” are replaced by the words “teaching, learning, and assessment methods.”
 - bb) The following sentence 6 is added:

“6The degree program, course of study, examination requirements, module descriptions, and admission requirements, including provisions for compensating for disadvantages for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, are documented and published.”

- b) Paragraph 5, sentence 2, no. 4 is amended to read as follows:
- “4. an adequate and workload-appropriate examination frequency and organization, which is coherently justified in an examination concept and whose workload appropriateness is regularly evaluated with the involvement of students as part of the program’s further development within the meaning of § 14; modules shall have a scope of at least five ECTS credits.”
- c) The following paragraph 7 is added:
- “(7) A degree program may be designated and advertised as ‘dual’ if the learning locations (at least a university or vocational academy and a company) are systematically interlinked in terms of content, organization, and contractual arrangements.”
8. Section 13(3), sentence 2, is amended to read as follows:
- “2Exceptions to sentence 1, items 1 and 2, are permitted for teacher training at vocational schools and for master’s programs for career changers, as well as with respect to sentence 1, item 1, for the subjects of art and music.”
9. Section 15 is amended as follows:
- a) In the heading, the word “diversity” and a comma are inserted before the word “gender equality.”
- b) In the text, the words “to take diversity into account” and a comma are inserted after the word “concepts.”
10. Section 16 is amended as follows:
- a) In the heading, the words “Joint-Degree-Programmes” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes.”
- b) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:
- aa) In sentence 1, the words “Joint-Degree-Programmes” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes”.
- bb) The following new sentence 2 is inserted:
- “2. In all other respects, the provisions of Part 3 shall not apply.”
- cc) The current second sentence becomes the third sentence and is amended as follows: Point 3 is replaced by the following:
- “3. Where applicable, the provisions of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of September 7, 2005, on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, September 30, 2005, p. 22; L 271 of October 16, 2007, p. 18; L 93 of April 4, 2008, p. 28; L 33 of February 3, 2009, p. 49; L 305 of October 24, 2014, p. 115; L 177 of July 8, 2015, p. 60; L 268 of October 15, 2015, p. 35; L 95 of April 9, 2016, p. 20), as last amended by Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/782 of March 4, 2024 (OJ L, 2024/782, May 31, 2024), shall be taken into account.”
- c) In paragraph 2, the words “Joint Degree Programs” are replaced by the words “Joint Programs.”
11. Section 17 is amended as follows:
- a) In the heading, the words “by system-accredited universities” are inserted after the words “quality management system.”

- b) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:
 - aa) Sentence 1 is replaced by the following:

“1The institution has central educational objectives for teaching, which are reflected in the institution’s mission statement and in the curricula of the degree programs.”
 - bb) The following sentences 5 through 7 are added:

“5The institution shall establish provisions regarding periods of validity and deadlines in accordance with §§ 26 and 27. 6The institution may set shorter periods of validity and deadlines. 7If a quality management system provides for the formation of clusters, § 30(1) shall apply mutatis mutandis with regard to cluster sizes.”
12. Section 18 is amended as follows:
- a) The heading is replaced by the following:

“Measures and Implementation
of the Quality Management
Concept
of system-accredited institutions of higher education.”
 - b) In the first sentence of paragraph 1, the words “internal and external” are replaced by the words “within the institution and outside the institution,” and a semicolon and the words “the institution may independently assess the formal criteria” are inserted after the word “graduates.”
 - c) Paragraph 4 is amended to read as follows:

“(4) 1The institution shall document the evaluation of the degree programs, including the votes of the external participants, as well as the measures taken, and shall inform members of the institution, the sponsoring body, and the state in which the institution is located thereof. 2For the information of the public, it shall make the accreditation decisions and a brief summary of the quality assessment available to the Accreditation Council for publication. 3Section 29, sentence 2, applies mutatis mutandis.”
13. In § 22(2), sentence 1, the word “written” is replaced by the word “electronic.”
14. Section 24 is amended as follows:
- a) In paragraph 3, sentence 1, clause 2, the words “before being forwarded to the Accreditation Council” are inserted after the words “the audit report requires.”
 - b) In paragraph 5, sentence 1, the words “as a rule on site” are inserted after the word “panel of experts.”
 - c) The following paragraph 6 is added:

“(6) If the expert opinion contains recommendations regarding conditions, the institution of higher education and the agency may agree on an additional procedural step to address the issues before submitting the application to the Accreditation Council.”
15. In § 25(5)(2), the words “Joint-Degree-Programmen” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes.”
16. Section 26 is amended as follows:
- a) Paragraph 2 is amended as follows:
 - aa) Sentence 1 is amended to read as follows:

“1. Before the expiration of the accreditation period, an application for reaccreditation must be submitted; if successful, this reaccreditation shall immediately follow the previous accreditation.”

bb) The following new sentences 2 and 3 are inserted:

“2If an application is submitted in a timely manner as defined herein, the accreditation shall be extended for the duration of the administrative proceedings. 3Reaccreditation shall take effect no later than the start of the second semester or trimester following the announcement of the accreditation decision.”

cc) The current sentence 2 becomes sentence 4.

b) Paragraph 3 is amended to read as follows:

“(3) 1The period of validity of the accreditation may be extended for a total period of up to two years if

1. in the case of program accreditation, the institution is preparing an application for a cluster or system accreditation that includes the respective degree program, or
2. the institution applies for an extension of the deadline in justified exceptional cases that are wholly or partly beyond the institution’s control; the extraordinary extension of the deadline in individual cases shall be credited toward the next accreditation period.”

2If an application for system accreditation has been submitted, the accreditation of degree programs whose accreditation expires during the proceedings may be extended for the duration of the proceedings plus one year. 3If an accredited degree program is discontinued, the accreditation may be extended for students still enrolled at the time the accreditation period expires.”

17. Section 29, sentence 3, is deleted.

18. Section 30(2) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) 1Groups of more than four degree programs must be approved by the Accreditation Council prior to submission of the application. 2This applies to combined degree programs regardless of the size of the group.”

19. In § 32 (2), second sentence, the phrase “pursuant to § 12 (5)” is inserted after the word “feasibility.”

20. Section 33 is amended as follows:

a) The heading is replaced by the following:

“Joint Programs.”

b) Paragraph 1 is amended as follows:

aa) In sentence 1, the words “Joint-Degree-Programm” are replaced by the words “Joint Programme”.

bb) Sentence 2 is amended as follows:

aaa) In the introductory clause, the phrase “Joint-Degree-Programmes pursuant to Sections 2 and 3” is replaced by the phrase “Joint Programmes pursuant to Sections 10 and 16.”

bbb) In paragraph 2, the words “Joint-Degree-Programs” are replaced by the words “Joint Programs.”

ccc) In paragraph 4, the words “Joint-Degree-Programs” are replaced by the words “Joint Programs.”

ddd) In paragraph 5(a), the words “Joint-Degree-Program” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes.”

eee) Paragraph 7 is amended to read as follows:

“7. The Agency has published at least a summary of the expert opinion, including the assessment and rationale, on its website in English.”

- cc) The following new sentence 4 is inserted:
“4. If the accreditation decision is not made in accordance with sentence 1, in deviation from § 22, the provisions of §§ 10 and 16 for joint programs within the meaning of Section 10(1) shall nevertheless apply mutatis mutandis.”
- dd) The previous sentences 4 and 5 become sentences 5 and 6.
- ee) In the new sentence 5, the words “Joint Degree Programs” are replaced by the words “Joint Programs”.
- c) In paragraph 2, the words “Joint Degree Program” are replaced by the words “Joint Programmes.”
21. In § 34(5), second sentence, the reference to “§ 26(3), third sentence” is replaced by the reference to “§ 26(3), second sentence.”
22. Section 36 is amended to read as follows:

“§ 36

Evaluation

This regulation shall be reviewed regularly and within a reasonable timeframe.”

23. The following new § 37 is inserted:

“Section 37

Transitional Provisions

(1) In the case of Section 12(5), sentence 2, no. 4, where a condition within the meaning of Section 27 is to be imposed pursuant to the version of this Regulation in effect through July 31, 2025, the Accreditation Council may, if the available information is insufficient, require as a condition that the appropriateness of the workload be demonstrated as part of the examination concept.

(2) 1For applications submitted by March 31, 2026, § 11(1), sentence 1, § 12(1), sentence 6, Sections 15, 17(1), sentences 5, 6, and 7, and Section 30(2) of this Regulation shall continue to apply in the version in effect until the end of July 31, 2025. 2For applications submitted after April 1, 2026, this Regulation shall apply in the version effective as of August 1, 2025.”

24. The current Section 37 becomes Section 38.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on August 1, 2025.

Hanover, September 29, 2025

**Lower Saxony Ministry of
Science and Culture**

Mohr,
Minister