Data Sheet: Explanation of the Calculation Models

As of: August 1, 2025

Basis for data collection

In its survey, the Accreditation Council collects data on graduation rates as well as on by gender. The first two metrics are essential for providing the review panel and the Accreditation Council with an overall picture of the program's feasibility in accordance with Section 12(5) of the MRVO or the respective state regulation, as well as of academic success in accordance with Section 14 of the MRVO or the respective state regulation. They are important indicators of correlations and relationships critical to academic success throughout the course of study.

In the context of accreditation, a thorough review of degree programs that have been running for some time must therefore be based on this data and focus on anomalies. Subjective, case-by-case assessments are avoided, and misjudgments to the detriment of the institutions do not occur. Furthermore, the data the Accreditation Council to assess the report for plausibility.

The breakdown of student data by gender is an indispensable component that enables reviewers to assess whether the gender equality concepts required under § 15 MRVO or the respective state regulation are effective, and allows the Accreditation Council to verify the plausibility of the reviewers' assessments .

The limited amount of data collected satisfies the principle of data minimization.

Background of the Proposed Indicators

The top priority in developing this proposal was the maxim to collect only data that is already available at universities. To this end, discussions were held with, among others, practitioners from university administrations, the German Center for Higher Education and Science Research (DZHW), and the Federal Statistical Office. The experts surveyed also provided further valuable insights for a cost-effective yet meaningful data collection; among other things, the cohort-based approach resulted

Alternatively, starting on ##/##/2025, with the revision of the template, institutions may include their own analyses in the form of tables or charts in the accreditation report, provided that these align with the table templates in terms of the required information content.

Significance / Interpretation of the Collected Key Figures

The key figures provide insight into the feasibility of study and academic success; they are indicators of correlations and relationships critical to academic success throughout the course of study. However, they do not stand alone but must be viewed in context and require interpretation

context. Institutions are requested to address the key figures in their self-evaluation reports and to contextualize them, for example,

- the socioeconomic background of students in cases of longer average study duration,
- instructor absences in the event of a drop in graduation rates in a given semester ,
- the presence of a substantial number of students who are not enrolled with the aim of earning a degree,
- individual student decisions (part-time jobs, family obligations, etc.) in cases of high average duration of study

. This allows you to explain any implausibilities or anomalies to the Accreditation Council—which is not present during site visits and thus lacks access to any verbal explanations or background information—and, if necessary, avoid conditions being imposed.

Retrieving data using an Excel file

To retrieve the key figures, universities are asked to fill out the attached Excel file .

Column one provides an example of a seven-year accreditation period, which universities must adjust to reflect their actual valid accreditation period.

The completed Excel spreadsheets must be inserted as PDF files in the appropriate section of the report . Alternatively, evaluations provided by the institution in tabular or graphical form may be used. These cohort evaluations must be included in the accreditation report; it is not permissible to include the institution's own evaluations only in the supplementary application documents or as a link.

Key figures n < 10

For data with n < 10, it cannot be ruled out that conclusions can be drawn about individual persons. Furthermore, the Accreditation Council considers data with n < 10 to be of little significance. Instead, data from multiple semesters should be aggregated:

semester-based cohorts	First-year students starting in semester X		Graduates in RSZ or faster who began their studies in semester X			Graduates in ≤ RSZ + 1 semester with studies beginning in semester X			Graduates in ≤ RSZ + 2 semesters who began their studies in semester X		
	total	of which women	Total	of which women	Degree-rate in %	Total	of which women	Degree-rate in %	Total	of which women	Graduation rate in %
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Fall 2012/2013-Spring 2016	18	13	6	2	33%	11	8	61%	15	12	83.33%

If aggregation is not possible—for example, because this is an initial accreditation—it is all the more important to describe and contextualize the situation in the accreditation report; for example, as follows:

> *"The number of graduates is too small to generate meaningful data. Nevertheless, the program director/department has the impression that half of the graduates did not exceed the standard period of study, or only slightly."*

This approach addresses potential data protection concerns.

The following provides guidance on the graduation rate:

Graduation rate:

Semester-based cohorts	First-year students who starting their studies in Semester X		Graduates in RSZ or earlier, starting their studies in Semester X			Graduates in ≤ RSZ + 1 semester, starting in semester X			Graduates in ≤ RSZ + 2 semesters with studies beginning in semester X		
	Total	of which women	Total	of whom are women	Graduation rate in %	Total	of which women	Graduation rate in %	Total	of which women	Graduation rate in %
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
SS 2019[1)]					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2018/2019					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2018					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2017/2018					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2017					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2016/2017					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2016					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2015/2016					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2015					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2014/2015					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2014	50	25	30	15	60	35	17	70	40	20	80
Fall 2013/2014					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Spring 2013					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Fall 2012/2013					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Total					#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!

The graduation rate is recorded in semester-based cohorts for the previous accreditation period.

Graduation is defined as completion of studies within the standard period of study (SPS) plus two semesters and is calculated as follows: “Graduates who began their studies in semester X” divided by “First-year students who began their studies in semester X.”

$$\frac{\text{Graduates within the standard period of study plus two semesters who began their studies in semester X}}{\text{First-year students who began their studies in semester X}}$$

The cohorts are organized by semester and queried accordingly. Example: Summer Semester 2014. Columns two and three indicate that 50 students began their studies in the Summer Semester 2014 and show the numerical (absolute) proportion of female . The first-year students of the 2014 summer semester are then examined over time in the same row:

Columns four through six indicate that 30 of these 50 students completed their studies within the standard period of study (SPS) or sooner; this represents 60% of the first-year students in the cohort.

Columns seven through nine indicate that 35 students who enrolled in the summer semester of 2014 began their studies and completed their degree within the standard duration of study (RSZ) **plus** one additional semester; this represents 70% of the cohort's first-year students. This is a **cumulative** figure; column seven includes all "graduates within **≤** RSZ plus one semester."

Finally, columns 10 through 12 indicate that 40 students who began their studies in the 10th summer semester of 2014 completed their degree within the RSZ **plus** two additional semesters, and that the graduation rate is 80%. Column ten includes all "graduates in **≤** RSZ plus two semesters."

It is inherent in the presentation of semester-based cohorts that no data on the graduation rate or

- If the number of cases in the winter and/or summer semesters is very low, the cohorts may be presented by academic year. This would be explicitly indicated and explained.
- Each institution is free to provide additional details to clarify the graduation rate, such as information on withdrawals or changes in degree programs. This should be done in a format of the institution's choosing **outside of the provided Excel tables**.
- The values from column ten must be entered into the ELIAS application form under "Success Rate," soon to be renamed "Graduation Rate."