

State Ordinance Regulating the Accreditation of Study Programs in the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (State Ordinance on the Accreditation of Study Programs — StudakkLVO M-V)

Effective **March 10, 2020**

GS Meckl.-Vorp. Gl.-No. 221 - 26 - 1

Pursuant to Article 1(1) of the Act on the State Treaty Concerning the Organization of a Joint Accreditation System for Quality Assurance in Studies and Teaching at German Universities of December 18, 2017 (GVOB1. M-V p. 369) in conjunction with Article 4, paragraphs 1 through 4, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of June 20, 2017 (GVOB1. M-V p. 370), the State Government hereby enacts:

Part 1
General Provisions

§ 1
Scope of Application

(1) This regulation, based on Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of June 20, 2017 (GVOB1. M-V p. 370), the details regarding the formal criteria under Article 2, paragraph 2, the subject-specific and content-related criteria under Article 2, paragraph 3, and the procedure under Article 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(2) A bachelor's degree from a vocational academy accredited on the basis of corresponding regulations of other states is equivalent under higher education law to a bachelor's degree from a university.

§ 2
Forms of Accreditation

Forms of accreditation are the procedures under Article 3, paragraph 1, number 1 of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation (system-accreditation), pursuant to Article 3(1)(2) (program accreditation), or alternative accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

Part 2
Formal Criteria for Degree Programs

§ 3
Program Structure and Duration

(1) In the system of tiered degree programs, the Bachelor's degree is the first standard degree conferring professional qualifications in higher education; the Master's degree constitutes a further higher education degree conferring professional qualifications. Undergraduate degree programs leading directly to a Master's degree are excluded, with the exception of the degree programs mentioned in paragraph 3.

(2) The standard duration of study for full-time programs is six, seven, or eight semesters for bachelor's programs and four, three, or two semesters for master's programs. For bachelor's programs, the standard duration of study for full-time study is at least three years. For consecutive programs, the total standard duration of study for full-time study is five years (ten

semester). Longer standard periods of study are permitted on an exceptional basis, provided the program is structured accordingly, in order to allow students to pursue an individualized academic path, particularly through part-time, distance, work-integrated, or dual study programs, as well as semesters of professional practice. Notwithstanding the third sentence, consecutive bachelor's and master's degree programs in the core artistic disciplines at universities of the arts and music may also be established with a total standard period of study of six years.

(3) Theological degree programs that qualify students for the office of pastor, the priesthood, or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological studies") need not be structured in stages and may have a standard period of study of ten semesters.

§ 4
Program Profiles

(1) Master's degree programs may be classified as "application-oriented" and "research-oriented." Master's programs at universities of the arts and music conservatories may have a distinct artistic profile. Master's programs that provide the educational qualifications required for a teaching position have a distinct teaching-oriented profile. The specific profile must be specified in the accreditation.

(2) When establishing a master's program, it must be determined whether it is a consecutive or continuing education program. Continuing education master's programs correspond to consecutive master's programs in terms of the standard duration of study and the thesis requirements, and lead to the same level of qualification and the same entitlements.

(3) Bachelor's and Master's degree programs require a thesis that demonstrates the ability to independently address a problem within the respective field using scientific or artistic methods within a specified timeframe.

§ 5
Admission Requirements and Transfers Between Programs

(1) The admission requirement for a master's program is a first professional university degree. Continuing education

Master's programs require qualified professional experience of generally no less than one year.

(2) As an admission requirement for artistic master's programs, proof of the necessary special artistic aptitude must be provided.

(3) Additional requirements for admission to master's programs may be stipulated in accordance with state law.

§ 6

Degrees and Degree Titles

(1) Upon successful completion of a bachelor's or master's degree program, only one degree—either the bachelor's or master's degree—is awarded, unless the State Higher Education Act provides for other degree designations. Exceptions are possible in the case of multiple-degree programs. Degrees are not differentiated based on the standard duration of study.

(2) The following titles are to be used for Bachelor's and consecutive Master's degrees:

1. Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) in the subject groups of Language and Cultural Studies, Sports, Sports Science, Social Sciences, Art History, Performing Arts, and, where the program's content warrants, in the subject group of Economics as well as in applied arts programs,
2. Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and Master of Science (M.S.) in the subject areas of mathematics, natural sciences, medicine, agricultural, forestry, and food sciences; in the subject areas of engineering and economics, provided the program focuses on relevant content;
3. Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.) and Master of Engineering (M.Eng.) in the subject area of engineering, provided the program content is appropriately aligned,
4. Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) in the subject area of Law,
5. Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) and Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in the Fine Arts subject group,
6. Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.) and Master of Music (M.Mus.) in the Music subject group,
7. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) for degree programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching career. For a multidisciplinary degree program, a designation corresponding to numbers 1 through 7 may be assigned based on the program's area of focus.

Subject-specific additions to degree titles and bilingual degree titles are not permitted. Bachelor's degrees with the addition "honors" ("B.A. hon.") are not permitted. For interdisciplinary and combined degree programs—

The degree title is determined by the field of study that predominates in the program. For continuing education programs, master's degrees that differ from the aforementioned titles may also be used. For theological programs that qualify students for the office of pastor, the priesthood, or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological program"), alternative titles may also be used.

(3) In the degree documents, it may be clarified in an appropriate place that the qualification level of the bachelor's degree corresponds to a diploma degree at universities of applied sciences, or that the qualification level of a master's degree corresponds to a diploma degree at universities or equivalent institutions of higher education.

(4) Detailed information about the degree program underlying the degree is provided in the Diploma Supplement, which is included with every degree certificate.

§ 7

Modularization

(1) The degree programs are to be structured into study units (modules) that are thematically and temporally defined by the grouping of course content. The content of a module is to be designed so that it can generally be taught within a maximum of two consecutive semesters; in particularly justified exceptional cases, a module may also extend over more than two semesters. For the core artistic subject in the Bachelor's program, at least two modules are mandatory, which may account for approximately two-thirds of the total study time.

(2) The description of a module shall include at least:

1. Module content and learning objectives,
2. Teaching and learning methods,
3. Prerequisites for participation,
4. Applicability of the module,
5. Requirements for the awarding of ECTS credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS credits),
6. ECTS credits and grading,
7. Frequency of the module's offering,
8. Workload and
9. Duration of the module.

(3) The prerequisites for participation must specify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful participation, as well as guidance for appropriate preparation by students. Regarding the applicability of the module, the relationship to other modules must be described

whether it is part of the same degree program and to what extent it is suitable for use in other degree programs. The requirements for awarding ECTS credits must specify how a module can be successfully completed (type of examination, scope, duration).

§ 8

Credit Point System

(1) Each module is assigned a specific number of ECTS credits based on the workload required of the students. As a general rule, 30 credits are allocated per semester. One credit corresponds to a total student workload of 25 to a maximum of 30 hours of in-class and self-study. ECTS credits are awarded for a module if the student demonstrates the performance requirements specified in the examination regulations. The awarding of ECTS credits does not necessarily require an examination, but rather the successful completion of the respective module.

(2) A minimum of 180 ECTS credits must be earned to qualify for a bachelor's degree. For a master's degree, 300 ECTS credits are required, taking into account the student's prior studies up to the first professionally qualifying degree. In individual cases, exceptions may be made if the student possesses the appropriate qualifications, even if 300 ECTS credits are not attained upon completion of a master's program. For consecutive Bachelor's and Master's programs in the core artistic disciplines at art and music colleges with a standard duration of six years, the Master's level is achieved with 360 ECTS credits.

(3) The scope of work for the bachelor's thesis is 6 to 12 ECTS credits, and for the master's thesis, 15 to 30 ECTS credits. In Fine Arts programs, the scope of work for the bachelor's thesis may, in justified exceptional cases, amount to up to 20 ECTS credits, and for the master's thesis, up to 40 ECTS credits.

(4) In justified exceptional cases, up to 75 ECTS credits per academic year may be applied for degree programs with special academic organizational measures. In this context, the workload for one ECTS credit is calculated at 30 hours. Special academic organizational measures may pertain in particular to the learning environment and supervision, the structure of the program, academic planning, and measures to ensure the student's livelihood.

(5) For teacher education programs leading to certification for elementary or primary school teaching, for cross-disciplinary teaching at the primary level, and for all or specific types of secondary schools, for teaching positions covering all or specific types of lower secondary schools, as well as for special education teaching positions at the lower secondary level, a master's degree may be awarded if a total of 300 ECTS credits have been earned, including at least 240 ECTS credits acquired at the university and the pre-service training period.

§ 9

Special Criteria for Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions

(1) The scope and nature of existing partnerships with companies and other institutions, including non-higher-education learning venues and course components as well as the language(s) of instruction, are contractually regulated and described on the university's website. When applying credit transfer models within the framework of program-specific collaborations, the substantive equivalence of non-higher-education qualifications to be transferred and their equivalence to the intended qualification level are clearly demonstrated.

(2) In the case of program-specific collaborations with non-higher education institutions, the added value for future students and the degree-granting institution is clearly demonstrated.

§ 10

Special Provisions for Joint Degree Programs

(1) A joint degree program is a multi-level degree program coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education in collaboration with one or more institutions of higher education in foreign countries within the European Higher Education Area; it leads to a joint degree and has the following additional characteristics:

1. Integrated curriculum,
2. A study component at one or more foreign universities of generally at least 25 percent,
3. contractually regulated cooperation,
4. coordinated admission and examination procedures, and
5. joint quality assurance.

(2) Qualifications and periods of study are recognized in accordance with the Act of May 16, 2007, implementing the Convention of April 11, 1997, on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Federal Law Gazette 2007 II, p. 712) (Lisbon Convention). The ECTS is applied in accordance with Sections 7 and 8(1), and the distribution of credit points is regulated. For a bachelor's degree, 180 to 240 credit points must be earned, and for a master's degree, no fewer than 60 credit points. Essential program information is published and accessible to students at all times.

(3) If a Point-Degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic higher education institution in collaboration with one or more higher education institutions from countries outside the European Higher Education Area (non-European cooperation partners), then, upon application by the domestic institution of higher education, paragraphs 1 and 2 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* if the non-European cooperation partners agree in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution of higher education to undergo accreditation in accordance with the criteria and procedural rules set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 as well as in

§ 16(1) and § 33(1).

Part 3

Academic and Content-Related Criteria for Degree Programs and Quality Management Systems

§ 11

Qualification Objectives and Degree Level

(1) The qualification objectives and the intended learning outcomes are clearly formulated and transparently reflect the objectives of higher education set forth in Article 2, Paragraph 3, Number 1 of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation. The dimension of personal development also encompasses the future civic, political, and cultural roles of the graduates. Upon graduation, students should be able to play a decisive role in shaping social processes in a critical and reflective manner, with a sense of responsibility and democratic civic spirit.

(2) The academic and scientific/artistic requirements encompass the aspects of knowledge and understanding (broadening, deepening, and comprehending knowledge), the application, use, and creation of knowledge/art (utilization and transfer, scientific innovation), communication and cooperation, as well as scientific/artistic self-understanding and professionalism, and are consistent with the level of the degree awarded.

(3) Bachelor's degree programs are designed to impart foundational academic knowledge, methodological skills, and profession-specific qualifications, ensuring a broad academic grounding. Consecutive master's degree programs are structured as programs that deepen, broaden, or offer interdisciplinary or specialized study. Professional master's programs typically require at least one year of qualified professional experience. The program design of professional master's programs takes professional experience into account and builds upon it to achieve the qualification objectives. In designing the program, the institution outlines the relationship between professional qualifications and the academic offerings, as well as the equivalence of requirements to consecutive master's programs. Artistic programs foster and develop the ability for artistic creation.

§ 12

Coherent Program Concept and Adequate Implementation

(1) The curriculum is appropriately structured, taking into account the specified entry requirements and with a view to achieving the program objectives. The program objectives, the program title, the degree and its designation, and the module concept are coherently aligned. The program concept encompasses diverse teaching and learning methods adapted to the respective academic culture and program format, as well as practical components where applicable. It creates suitable conditions to promote student mobility, enabling students to spend time at other universities without losing academic progress. It actively involves students in the

design of teaching and learning processes (student-centered teaching and learning) and provides opportunities for self-directed study.

(2) The curriculum is implemented by teaching staff with sufficient subject-specific and methodological-didactic qualifications. The integration of research and teaching is ensured, in accordance with the institution's profile, particularly through full-time professors in both undergraduate and graduate programs. The institution takes appropriate measures for staff selection and qualification.

(3) The program also has adequate resources (in particular non-academic staff, facilities, and equipment, including IT infrastructure, teaching and learning materials).

(4) Exams and assessment methods enable a meaningful evaluation of the learning outcomes achieved. They are module-based and competency-oriented.

(5) The feasibility of completing the program within the standard period of study is ensured. This includes, in particular,

1. a predictable and reliable academic schedule,
2. minimal overlap between courses and exams,
3. a reasonable average workload commensurate with the examination load, whereby the learning outcomes of a module must be designed so that they can generally be achieved within a semester or a year, as validated by regular surveys, and
4. an appropriate and manageable frequency and organization of exams, whereby, as a rule, only one exam is scheduled per module and modules should have a minimum scope of five ECTS credits.

(6) Degree programs with a specific profile must have a coherent program concept that appropriately reflects the distinctive characteristics of that profile.

§ i3

Design of the Academic Content of the Programs

(1) The relevance and adequacy of the academic and scientific requirements are ensured. The academic content and the methodological and didactic approaches of the curriculum are continuously reviewed and adapted to academic and didactic developments. To this end, systematic consideration is given to academic discourse at the national and, where applicable, international level.

(2) In degree programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching career, accreditation is based both on the evaluation of educational sciences and subject-specific disciplines, as well as their didactics, in accordance with state-wide and state-specific subject requirements, and

the structural requirements for teacher education that are common to all federal states and those specific to individual federal states.

(3) In the context of the accreditation of teacher education programs, particular attention must be paid to whether

1. an integrated program at universities or equivalent institutions comprising at least two subject-specific disciplines and educational sciences during both the bachelor's and master's phases (exceptions are permitted for the subjects of art and music),
2. practical school training already during the bachelor's program, and
3. the program and degrees are differentiated by teaching certification

have been implemented. Exceptions are permitted for teaching at vocational schools.

§ 14

Academic Success

The program is subject to ongoing monitoring with the participation of students and graduates. Based on this, measures are developed to ensure academic success. These measures are continuously reviewed, and the results are used to further develop the program. Those involved are informed of the results and the measures taken, in compliance with data protection regulations.

§ 15

Gender Equality and Compensating for Disadvantages

The university has policies in place regarding gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special circumstances, as well as for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, which are implemented at the program level.

§ 16

Special Provisions for Joint Degree Programs

(1) For joint degree programs, the provisions of § 11, paragraphs 1 and 2, as well as § 12, paragraph 1, sentences 1 through 3; paragraph 2, sentence 1; and paragraphs 3 and 4, and § 14 apply accordingly. In addition:

1. The admission requirements and selection procedures must be appropriate to the level and the academic discipline in which the program is situated.
2. It can be demonstrated that the program achieves the intended learning outcomes.
3. Where applicable, the requirements of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of September 7,

September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22), as last amended by Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/608 (OJ L 104, 15.4.2019, p. 1), is taken into account.

4. In the supervision, design of the degree program, and the teaching and learning methods used, the diversity of the students and their needs are respected, and the specific requirements of mobile students are taken into account.
5. The university's quality management system ensures the implementation of the above provisions and those set forth in § 17.

(2) If a joint degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education in collaboration with one or more institutions of higher education from countries outside the European Higher Education Area (non-European cooperation partners), then, upon application by the domestic institution of higher education, paragraph 1 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* if the non-European cooperation partners commit in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution of higher education to accreditation in accordance with the criteria and procedural rules set forth in paragraph 1, as well as in § 10, paragraphs 1 and 2, and in § 33, paragraph 1.

§ 17

Concept of the Quality Management System (Objectives, Processes, Instruments)

(1) The university has a mission statement for teaching that is reflected in the curricula of its degree programs. The quality management system adheres to the values and standards of the mission statement for teaching and aims to continuously improve the quality of education. It ensures the systematic implementation of the requirements outlined in Parts 2 and 3. The university has established and published university-wide decision-making processes, authorities, and responsibilities for the establishment, review, further development, and discontinuation of degree programs, as well as the university's own procedures for the accreditation of degree programs within the framework of its quality management system.

(2) The quality management system was developed with the participation of the university's constituent groups and with input from external experts. It ensures the independence of quality assessments and includes procedures for handling internal conflicts as well as an internal grievance system. It is based on closed-loop control systems, covers all areas of the university's operations that are directly relevant to study and teaching, and is equipped with adequate and sustainable resources. The university regularly reviews and continuously improves its functionality and effectiveness with regard to the quality of education.

§ 18

Measures for Implementing the Quality Management Concept

(1) The quality management system includes regular evaluations of the degree programs and the relevant areas of instruction and study

by internal and external students, academic experts from outside the university, representatives from the professional field, and graduates. If a need for action is identified, the necessary measures are taken and implemented.

(2) To the extent that, based on the university's quality management system, evaluations of teacher education programs, teacher training programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, Protestant theological programs qualifying for the ministry, and other bachelor's and master's programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology, the requirements for participation and approval pursuant to

§ 25, paragraph 1, sentences 3 through 5, shall apply accordingly.

(3) The data required for the implementation of the quality management system is collected university-wide and on a regular basis.

(4) The university documents the evaluation of the degree programs by the university's internal quality management system, including the opinions of external stakeholders, and regularly informs university members, the public, the sponsoring body, and the state where the university is located about the measures taken. It informs the public about the accreditation decisions made on the basis of the university's internal procedure and provides the Accreditation Council with the information required for publication pursuant to § 29.

§ 19

Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions

If a higher education institution offers a degree program in cooperation with a non-higher-education institution, the higher education institution is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements set forth in Parts 2 and 3. The degree-granting institution may not delegate decisions regarding the content and organization of the curriculum, admission, recognition, and credit transfer, the assignment and evaluation of examination performance, the administration of examination and student data, quality assurance procedures, or the criteria and procedures for selecting teaching staff.

§ 20

University Cooperation

(1) If a higher education institution enters into a program-specific cooperation with another higher education institution, the degree-granting institution or institutions shall ensure the implementation and quality of the program concept. The nature and scope of the cooperation shall be described, and the agreements underlying the cooperation shall be documented.

(2) If a system-accredited institution of higher education enters into a program-specific cooperation with another institution of higher education, the system-accredited institution may award the program the seal of the Accreditation Council pursuant to § 22 (4) sentence 2, provided that it is itself a degree-granting institution and ensures the implementation and quality of the program.

The quality of the program concept is ensured. Paragraph 1, sentence 2 applies *mutatis mutandis*.

(3) In the case of cooperation between institutions of higher education at the level of their quality management systems, system accreditation of each participating institution is required. At the request of the cooperating institutions, a joint system accreditation procedure is permitted.

§ 21

(not applicable)

Part 4

Procedural Rules for Program and System Accreditation

§ 22

Decision of the Accreditation Council; Awarding of the seal

(1) The Accreditation Council decides on accreditation at the request of the institution by determining compliance with the formal criteria and the academic and content-related criteria in accordance with Article 3(5), first sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 of this regulatory ordinance. The basis for the decision regarding the formal criteria is an audit report pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 3, sentence 1, number 2, letter b of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. The basis for the decision regarding the academic and content-related criteria is an expert opinion pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2, sentence 1, number 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(2) The decision shall be issued in writing. It must be supported by a statement of reasons.

(3) The institution shall be given the opportunity to comment prior to the Accreditation Council's decision if the Council intends to deviate significantly from the experts' recommendation. The deadline for submitting comments is one month.

(4) Upon accreditation, the Accreditation Council awards its seal to the degree program or the quality management system. In the case of system accreditation, the institution is granted the right to award the Accreditation Council's seal for the degree programs it has reviewed.

(5) The accreditation of Catholic theological degree programs that qualify students for the priesthood or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological studies") takes place exclusively in the form of program accreditation. In the case of full-theological and partial-theological degree programs, the decision of the Accreditation Council requires the approval of the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

§ 23

Documents to be Submitted

(1) The following documents must be attached to the application:

1. Self-evaluation report from the institution,
2. an accreditation report from an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council, consisting of an audit report and an expert opinion; in the case of institutional accreditation, the audit report refers to the evidence specified in items 3 and 4,
3. in the case of an application for system accreditation, additional evidence that at least one degree program has undergone the quality management system,
4. in the case of an application for system reaccreditation, evidence that, in principle, all bachelor's and master's degree programs have undergone the quality management system at least once.

(2) If the documents referred to in paragraph 1, item 2 are not written in German, translations into German must be submitted.

(3) As soon as the Accreditation Council makes an electronic data processing system available, it must be used.

§ 24

Commissioning of an agency; accreditation reports; Site Visit

(1) The university commissions an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council pursuant to Article 5, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1, Number 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation to evaluate the formal and substantive criteria and to prepare an accreditation report. For Catholic theology programs that qualify students for the priesthood or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theology program"), the evaluation is conducted by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Studies in Germany, which is accredited by the Accreditation Council.

(2) The institution shall provide the agency with a self-evaluation report that includes, at a minimum, information on the institution's quality objectives and on the formal and academic criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3. The institution's self-report, in the preparation of which the student council must be involved, shall not exceed 20 pages for program accreditation and 50 pages for system and cluster accreditation.

(3) The audit report is prepared by the Agency; for degree programs under Section 25(1), sentences 3 and 4, the audit report requires the approval of the persons designated therein. The relevant standards for the audit report are the formal criteria set forth in Part 2. It includes a recommendation regarding compliance with the formal criteria. The review report must be drafted using the template to be provided by the Accreditation Council. The institution must be informed immediately of any failure to meet a formal criterion.

(4) The expert opinion is issued by the expert panel pursuant to § 25. The expert panel receives the review report pursuant to paragraph 3. The relevant standards for the expert opinion are the subject-matter criteria set forth in Part 3. It includes a recommendation

regarding the determination of compliance with the technical and content-related criteria. The report must be drafted using the template to be provided by the Accreditation Council and shall not exceed 20 pages for program accreditation and 100 pages for system and cluster accreditation.

(5) As part of the evaluation of the academic and content-related criteria, the review panel conducts an on-site visit. In the case of the accreditation of a degree program that is not yet offered at the time the agency is commissioned (concept accreditation), the review panel may, by mutual agreement, waive the on-site visit. The same applies to the reaccreditation of a degree program.

§ 25

Composition of the Review Panel; Requirements for Reviewers

(1) The agencies' review panel for program accreditation shall consist of at least four members. It shall be composed as follows:

1. at least two university faculty members with expertise in the relevant field,
2. one representative from professional practice with expertise in the relevant field,
3. a student in a related field.

In the accreditation of degree programs that qualify students for admission to the preparatory service for a teaching career, a representative of the highest state authority responsible for the school system shall take the place of the person referred to in paragraph 2; for teacher training programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, a representative of the locally competent diocese or regional church shall also be included. In the accreditation of theological degree programs that qualify for the office of pastor, the priesthood, and the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological degree") and in all other bachelor's and master's degree programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, the person referred to in paragraph 2 shall be replaced by a representative of the competent church authority. For the degree programs mentioned in sentences 3 and 4, the submission of the expert opinion pursuant to § 24(4), sentence 1, requires the consent of the persons named in each case; without this consent, the expert opinion shall not be submitted to the Accreditation Council.

(2) The agencies' review panel for system accreditation consists of at least five members. It is composed as follows:

1. at least three university faculty members with relevant experience in quality assurance in the area of teaching,
2. one representative from the professional field,

3. one student.

(3) The university professors hold the majority of the votes. In the respective review panel, the majority of the reviewers must have experience with accreditations. In the case of a system accreditation, the majority of the reviewers must have experience with system accreditations.

(4) The evaluators are appointed by the agency commissioned to prepare the accreditation report. In making these appointments, the agency is bound by the procedure to be developed by the German Rectors' Conference in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 3, sentence 3 of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation.

(5) Any person who

1. is employed by or enrolled at the institution submitting the application for accreditation,
2. is employed by or enrolled at one of the higher education institutions participating in cooperative degree programs or joint degree programs, or
3. are deemed to be involved according to the customary rules of academia.

(6) The Agency shall inform the institution of higher education of the composition of the panel of experts prior to the appointment of the experts. The institution of higher education has the right to comment within a period of two weeks.

§ 26

Validity Period of Accreditation; Extension

(1) The initial accreditation is valid for a period of eight years from the start of the semester or trimester in which the accreditation decision is announced. If, in the case of program accreditation, the degree program has not yet been launched, the accreditation takes effect from the start of the semester or trimester in which the degree program is first offered, but no later than the start of the second semester or trimester following the announcement of the accreditation decision.

(2) Before the expiration of the accreditation period, a subsequent accreditation (reaccreditation) must be initiated. Reaccreditations are valid for a period of eight years.

(3) If an accredited degree program is discontinued, the accreditation may be extended for students who are still enrolled when the accreditation period expires. The accreditation of a degree program may be extended for a period of up to two years if the institution is preparing an application for a cluster or system accreditation that includes the respective degree program. When applying for a bundle or system accreditation, the accreditation of degree programs whose accreditation expires during the process may be provisionally extended for the duration of the process plus one year.

§ 27

Conditions

(1) A deadline of generally twelve months shall be set for the fulfillment of a condition.

(2) In justified exceptional cases, the deadline may be extended upon application by the institution.

(3) Proof of compliance with the condition must be provided to the Accreditation Council.

§ 28

Obligation to Report Changes

(1) The institution is required to notify the Accreditation Council immediately of any significant change to the subject of accreditation during the period of validity of the accreditation.

(2) The Accreditation Council shall decide whether the significant change is covered by the existing accreditation.

§ 29

Publication

The Accreditation Council's decision and the accreditation report shall be published by the Accreditation Council on its website. Personal data may not be disclosed in the publication unless the data subject has consented or obtaining the data subject's consent is not possible or would require disproportionate effort, and it is evident that the disclosure is in the data subject's interest. Sentences 1 and 2 apply mutatis mutandis to internal accreditation decisions of system-accredited institutions of higher education.

§ 30

Bundle Accreditation; Partial System Accreditation

(1) The expert opinion of the expert committee pursuant to Section 24(4) may cover multiple degree programs if they share a high degree of academic similarity that goes beyond mere affiliation with a disciplinary field (humanities and cultural studies, social sciences, or natural sciences) (bundled accreditation). The academic and content-related criteria under Part 3 must be assessed separately for each degree program. A bundle shall consist of no more than ten degree programs.

(2) At the university's request, the Accreditation Council may approve the specific composition of the bundle prior to the submission of the application pursuant to § 23.

(3) In exceptional cases, a subunit of the institution responsible for organizing studies may be the subject of system accreditation. This may be the case in particular if

1. accreditation of the quality management system for the entire institution is not yet appropriate or feasible,

2. the subunit's quality management system is integrated into the institution, and
3. at least one degree program of the subunit has already undergone this system.

§ 31

Random Sampling

(1) In the case of system accreditation and partial system accreditation, the review panel conducts a sample review in accordance with Section 25(2). The sample review examines whether the intended effects of the quality management system under review are being achieved at the program level.

(2) The subject of the sample check is

1. the consideration of all criteria in accordance with Parts 2 and 3 within a degree program that has undergone the institution's quality management system, and
2. the consideration of formal and subject-specific criteria in accordance with Parts 2 and 3, as determined by the review panel.

When selecting the sample, the review panel takes into account the range of academic disciplines offered by the institution.

(3) If the institution offers degree programs that also prepare students for a regulated profession, one such program must be included in the sample, taking into account the criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3 that apply to degree programs; The same applies in the case of teacher training programs, for one program of each type of teaching qualification offered, as well as for programs in Protestant or Catholic theology/religion. The sample shall include one representative appointed by the body responsible for the respective regulated profession, or a representative appointed by the body responsible for the respective regulated profession, or a representative of the highest state authority responsible for the school system, or the respective church body.

Part 5

Procedural Rules for Special Degree Programs

§ 32

Combined Degree Programs

(1) If students select individual courses from a larger number of eligible courses for their studies, each of these courses constitutes a sub-program as part of a combined degree program.

(2) The subject of accreditation is the combined degree program. The institutions ensure through their respective quality management systems that the program is feasible in all possible subject combinations.

(3) The accreditation of a combined degree program may be supplemented by the inclusion of additional elective sub-programs or subjects. This does not alter the accreditation period for the combined degree program.

(4) The accreditation certificate shall list all sub-programs or fields of study included in the accreditation. If the accreditation is expanded in accordance with paragraph 3, a new accreditation certificate shall be issued.

(5) The provisions of Part 4 remain unaffected in all other respects.

§ 33

Joint Degree Programs

(1) For joint degree programs involving a domestic institution of higher education and other institutions from the European Higher Education Area, the accreditation decision may be made, in deviation from Section 22(1), by recognizing the evaluation conducted by an agency listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). The Accreditation Council recognizes this evaluation upon application by the institution and grants its seal if compliance with the formal and academic criteria for joint degree programs pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 has been demonstrated and the evaluation process has met the following requirements:

1. the Accreditation Council was notified of the conduct of the procedure prior to its commencement,
2. The accreditation decision is based on a self-evaluation report submitted by the cooperating institutions, which includes, in particular, information on the respective national regulatory frameworks and highlights the distinctive features of the joint degree program,
3. an on-site visit has taken place at at least one location of the program with the participation of representatives from all cooperating universities as well as other stakeholders,
4. the evaluation is based on an expert report that complies with the requirements for joint degree programs in Parts 2 and 3,
5. the evaluation was conducted by a panel of at least four experts, composed as follows:
 - a) Members from at least two of the countries participating in the joint degree program,
 - b) at least one student representative,
 - c) the panel of experts represents expertise in the relevant subjects and disciplines, including the labor market or professional world in the relevant fields, as well as expertise in the area of quality assurance in higher education, and possesses knowledge of the higher education systems of the participating institutions as well as the languages of instruction used, and
 - d) the requirements pursuant to § 25, paragraph 3, sentence 1, and paragraphs 5 and 6 have been met,

6. the evaluation identifies the following characteristics: justification, sustainability, and, where applicable, demonstrated fulfillment of requirements and
7. The agency has published the report and the assessment on its website in German and English.

Section 22, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, sentence 1; Section 26, paragraph 1, sentence 1, and paragraph 2, sentence 1; and Sections 28 and 29 apply mutatis mutandis. Notwithstanding § 26(1), first sentence, and (2), second sentence, the accreditation period shall be six years. Upon publication, the decision shall be identified as an accreditation decision based on the separate procedure for joint degree programs. The institution must clearly indicate this in the degree certificates.

(2) If a joint degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education in collaboration with one or more institutions of higher education in foreign countries that do not belong to the European Higher Education Area (non-European cooperation partners), then, upon application by the domestic institution of higher education, paragraph 1 shall apply mutatis mutandis if the non-European cooperation partners commit in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution of higher education to accreditation in accordance with the criteria set forth in paragraph 1 as well as in § 10, paragraphs 1 and 2, and § 16, paragraph 1.

Part 6

Alternative Accreditation Procedures Pursuant to Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation

§ 34

Alternative Accreditation Procedures

(1) In addition to the two procedures set forth in Part 4, alternative procedures for ensuring and developing the quality of study and teaching may also be implemented in accordance with Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation.

(2) In alternative procedures, the criteria set forth in Part 2 and Part 3 must be observed. The provisions of Article 3(2), first sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation, as well as the principles governing the appropriate involvement of the academic community set forth in the State Treaty on Study Accreditation and in this Regulation, shall apply mutatis mutandis; likewise, the requirements for participation and consent pursuant to Section 18(2) shall apply mutatis mutandis.

(3) The implementation of alternative procedures requires the prior approval of the Accreditation Council and the state ministry responsible for higher education in the respective state; the Accreditation Council may commission an external review. The application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council through the competent science authority. The Accreditation Council may, within the framework of the...

In accordance with the State, it may refuse its consent only if the alternative procedure does not comply with the requirements of Article 2 and the provisions of Article 3(2), first sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, as well as with the principles for appropriate academic involvement set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in this Regulation. The alternative procedure shall be suitable for gaining fundamental insights into alternative approaches to external quality assurance beyond the procedures specified in Article 3(1)(1) and (2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(4) The Accreditation Council shall develop rules of procedure that, in particular, govern the requirements for applications.

(5) The alternative procedure is limited to a maximum of eight years. Section 22(4), sentence 2, and Section 26(3), sentence 3, apply mutatis mutandis. It is overseen by the Accreditation Council and must generally be evaluated by an independent, research-oriented institution two years before the end of the project period.

Part 7

Miscellaneous

Section 35

Connection with procedures concerning the suitability of a degree program under professional licensing law

(1) Accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(1) and Article 3(1)(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation may, at the request of the institution of higher education, be organizationally linked to procedures that determine the eligibility of a study program under professional licensing law.

(2) The participation of external experts with an advisory role in the review committees pursuant to § 25(1) and (2), in addition to the other representatives or representatives of professional practice, shall be effected through the appointment by the state authority responsible for the regulated profession in question.

§ 36

Evaluation

(1) The application and effects of this regulation shall be reviewed as of December 31, 2023.

(2) The results shall be reported to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Section 37

Entry into Force

This regulation shall enter into force on January 1, 2018.

Schwerin, March 10, 2020

**Minister President
Manuela Schwesig**

**Bettina Martin, Minister of
Education, Science, and Culture**