

**Regulation  
Regulating the Details of Program Accreditation in the  
Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Program  
Accreditation Regulation – StudakkVO) of December  
6, 2018**

**Reference:** HmbGVBl. 2018, p. 450

Pursuant to Article 4, sentence 1, of the Act on the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of November 28, 2017 (HmbGVBl. p. 365) in conjunction with Article 4, paragraphs 1 through 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation of June 1, 2017, to June 20, 2017 (Hamburg Official Gazette, p. 366), as well as Section 1(5) of the Higher Education Delegation Ordinance of August 17, 2004 (HmbGVBl p. 348), last amended on February 6, 2018 (HmbGVBl. p. 38), the following is enacted:

**Part 1 General  
Provisions**

**Section 1  
Scope**

(1) Pursuant to Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, this ordinance specifies the details regarding the formal criteria under Article 2(2), the subject-matter criteria under Article 2(3), and the procedure under Article 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. These criteria apply to the extent that quality assurance is conducted in accordance with the procedure set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(2) Unless otherwise specified in this Regulation, the following provisions on program accreditation also apply to degree programs at state and state-recognized vocational academies leading to the degree of Bachelor. A Bachelor's degree accredited on the basis of this Regulation is equivalent under higher education law to a Bachelor's degree from a university.

**§ 2  
Forms of Accreditation**

Forms of accreditation are the procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(1) (system accreditation), Article 3(1)(2) (program accreditation), or alternative accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study 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 listed 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 degree programs, the total standard duration of study for full-time study is five years (ten semesters). Longer standard periods of study are, pursuant to § 54(5) of the Hamburg Higher Education Act (HmbHG) of July 18, 2001 (HmbGVBl. p. 171), last amended on May 29, 2018 (HmbGVBl. p. 200), as amended, subject to appropriate organizational arrangements, in order to enable students to pursue an individualized learning path, particularly through part-time, distance, part-time while working, or dual study programs, as well as semesters of professional practice. Notwithstanding sentence 3, consecutive bachelor's and master's degree programs in core artistic disciplines at art and music colleges may also be established with a total standard period of study of six years, subject to further provisions of state law.

(3) Theological degree programs that qualify students for the office of pastor, the priesthood, or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological program") 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 distinguished as "application-oriented" and "research-oriented." Master's degree programs at colleges of art and music may have a special artistic profile. Master's degree programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching position have a special teaching-related profile. The respective profile must be specified in the accreditation.

(2) When establishing a master's program, it must be determined whether it is consecutive or continuing education. Continuing education master's programs correspond to consecutive master's programs in terms of the standard period of study and the thesis, 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 discipline using scientific or artistic methods within a specified timeframe.

## **§5 Admission Requirements and Transitions Between Programs**

(1) The admission requirement for a master's program is a first professional university degree. For continuing education and artistic master's programs, the professional university degree may be replaced by an entrance examination in accordance with § 39(3) HmbHG. Continuing education master's programs generally require at least one year of qualified professional experience.

(2) As an admission requirement for artistic master's programs, applicants must demonstrate the specific artistic aptitude required for such programs.

(3) Pursuant to § 39(1), sentences 3 and 4, and § 39(2), sentence 3, of the Hamburg Higher Education Act (HmbHG), additional requirements for admission to master's programs may be stipulated in the statutes of the universities.

## **§ 6 Degrees and Degree Titles**

(1) Upon successful completion of a Bachelor's or Master's program, only one degree—the Bachelor's or Master's degree—is awarded, unless it is a multiple-degree program. In this context, there is no differentiation of degrees based on the standard duration of study.

(2) The following titles shall 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 content is relevant, in the subject group of Economics as well as in applied arts programs,
2. Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) 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 field of engineering, provided the program content is relevant,
4. Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) in the field 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 programs that provide the educational requirements for a teaching position.

For a multidisciplinary degree program, a designation in accordance with the program's academic focus may be provided in accordance with sentence 1, items 1 through 7. 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 based on the subject area 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"), different 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 a university of applied sciences

or that the qualification level of a master's degree corresponds to a diploma degree from universities or equivalent institutions of higher education.

(4) Detailed information regarding the specific program underlying the degree is provided in the Diploma Supplement, which is an integral part of every degree certificate.

## **§7 Modularization**

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

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

1. the module's content and learning objectives,
2. Teaching and learning methods,
3. prerequisites for participation,
4. Applicability of the module,
5. Requirements for the awarding of credit points 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 should specify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful participation, as well as guidance on how students should prepare. In the context of the module's applicability, the relationship to other modules in the same degree program must be described, as well as the extent to which it is suitable for use in other degree programs. Regarding the requirements for the awarding of ECTS credits, it must be specified how a module can be successfully completed (type, scope, and duration of the examination).

## **§ 8 Credit Point System**

(1) Each module must be assigned a specific number of ECTS credits based on the workload for students. As a rule, 30 credits per semester shall be used as a basis. 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 achievements 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) For the Bachelor's degree, no fewer than 180 ECTS credits must be demonstrated. For the Master's degree, 300 ECTS credits are required, taking into account the preceding studies up to the first professionally qualifying degree. In individual cases, deviations from this requirement may be permitted if the student possesses the appropriate qualifications, even if 300 ECTS credits are not attained upon completion of a Master's program. In 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 relate in particular to the learning

environment and support, program structure, academic planning, and measures to ensure financial support.

(5) For teacher education programs leading to certification for elementary or primary school teaching, for cross-disciplinary teaching positions at the primary level and for all or specific types of secondary schools, for teaching professions covering all or specific types of secondary schools at the lower secondary level, as well as for special education teaching professions 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 taking into account the preparatory service.

(6) At vocational academies and institutions offering bachelor's degree programs that integrate training and practical experience, or bachelor's training programs that integrate training and practical experience, 180 ECTS credits must generally be demonstrated for a bachelor's degree with a three-year program duration. The scope of the theory-based training components may not be less than 120 ECTS credits, and the scope of the practice-based training components may not be less than 30 ECTS credits.

## **§ 9**

### **Special Criteria for Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions**

(1) The scope and nature of existing collaborations with companies and other institutions must be contractually regulated, taking into account non-higher-education learning locations and course components as well as the languages of instruction, 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 must be clearly demonstrated.

(2) In the case of program-specific collaborations with non-higher-education institutions, the added value for prospective students and the degree-granting institution must be 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 from foreign countries within the European Higher Education Area, leading to a joint degree and exhibiting the following additional characteristics:

1. Integrated curriculum,
2. A study component at one or more foreign higher education institutions 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 in Higher Education in the European Region (Federal Law Gazette II, p. 712). The ECTS is applied in accordance with § 7 and § 8(1), and the distribution of credit points must be regulated. For a bachelor's degree, 180 to 240 credit points must be demonstrated, and for a master's degree, no fewer than 60 credit points. Essential program information must be published and made accessible to students at all times.

(3) If a joint degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education in conjunction 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, paragraphs 1 and 2 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 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 intended learning outcomes are clearly formulated and transparently reflect the goals of higher education set forth in Article 2, Paragraph 3, Item 1 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. The dimension of personal development also encompasses the future civic, political, and cultural roles of 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 subject-specific and scientific/artistic requirements encompass the aspects of knowledge and understanding (broadening, deepening, and comprehending knowledge), the application, use, and creation of knowledge or 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 serve to impart scientific foundations, methodological competence, and profession-specific qualifications, and ensure a broad scientific qualification. Consecutive Master's degree programs are designed as programs that deepen, broaden, or are interdisciplinary or in other fields. We-

Professional master's programs typically require at least one year of relevant professional experience. The curriculum design of continuing education master's programs takes professional experience into account and builds upon it to achieve the program's 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 with consecutive master's programs. Artistic programs foster and further 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 qualifications and with a view to achieving the qualification objectives. The qualification objectives, the program title, the degree and its designation, and the module concept are coherently aligned with one another. 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 profile of the institution, 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. the 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 one semester or one year, as validated by regular surveys, and

4. an adequate and workload-appropriate frequency and organization of examinations, whereby, as a rule, only one examination is scheduled per module and modules should have a minimum scope of five ECTS credits.

(6) Degree programs with a specific profile requirement shall have a self-contained program concept that appropriately reflects the specific characteristics of the profile.

### **§ 13**

#### **Academic and Content-Related Design of Degree Programs**

(1) The timeliness 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, the basis for accreditation is both 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 state-wide and state-specific structural guidelines for teacher education.

(3) In the context of the accreditation of teacher education programs, it must be examined in particular whether

1. an integrated program at universities or equivalent institutions comprising at least two subject-specific disciplines and educational sciences is offered 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 specialty

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

### **§ 14**

#### **Academic Success**

The program is subject to continuous monitoring with the participation of students and graduates. Based on this, measures to ensure academic success are derived. These are continuously reviewed, and the results are used for the further development of 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, 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, paragraphs 3 and 4, and § 14 apply accordingly. In addition, the following applies:

1. The admission requirements and selection procedures shall 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, 2005, on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ EU 2005 No. L 255, p. 22, 2007 No. L 271 p. 18, 2008 No. L 93, p. 28, 2009 No. L 33, p. 49, 2014 No. L 305, p. 115), as last amended on September 11, 2017 (OJ EU No. L 317, p. 119),
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 specified in § 17.

(2) If a joint degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education together with one or more non-European cooperation partners, paragraph 1 shall apply mutatis mutandis upon application by the domestic institution of higher education, provided that the non-European cooperation in the cooperation agreement with the domestic higher education institution to undergo accreditation in accordance with the criteria and procedural rules set forth in paragraph 1 as well as in § 10, paragraphs 1 and 2, and § 33, paragraph 1.

## **§ 17**

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

(1) The institution has a mission statement for teaching that is reflected in the curricula of its degree programs. The quality management system follows the values and

standards of the mission statement for teaching and aims to continuously improve the quality of study. It ensures the systematic implementation of the requirements specified in Part 2 and in §§ 11 through 15. The university has established and published university-wide the 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 studies and teaching, and is equipped with adequate and sustainable resources. The university regularly reviews and continuously refines its functionality and effectiveness with regard to the quality of studies.

## **§ 18**

### **Measures for Implementing the Quality Management Concept**

(1) The quality management system includes regular evaluations of degree programs and the areas of activity relevant to teaching and studies by internal and external students, academic experts from outside the university, representatives from the professional field, and graduates. If a need for action arises, the necessary measures are taken and implemented.

(2) If, on the basis of the university's quality management system, evaluations are also conducted of teacher education programs, teacher education programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, Protestant theological programs that qualify for the ministry, and other bachelor's and master's degree 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 degree programs within the 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 accreditation decisions made on the basis of the internal university procedure and provides the Accreditation Council with the information required for publication pursuant to § 29.

## **§ 19**

### **Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions**

If a university offers a degree program in cooperation with a non-university institution, the university is responsible for compliance with the requirements set forth in Part 2 and §§ 11 through 15. The degree-granting university may make 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, and the criteria and procedures for selecting teaching staff.

## **§ 20 University Collaborations**

(1) If a higher education institution enters into a program-specific cooperation with another higher education institution, the degree-granting institution ensures the implementation and quality of the program concept. The nature and scope of the cooperation are described, and the agreements underlying the cooperation are 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 Section 22(4), sentence 2, provided that it is itself a degree-granting institution and ensures the implementation and quality of the program concept. Paragraph 1, sentence 2, applies accordingly.

(3) In the case of cooperation between higher education institutions at the level of their quality management systems, system accreditation of each of the participating institutions is required. Upon application by the cooperating institutions, a joint system accreditation procedure is permissible.

## **§ 21 Special Criteria for Bachelor's Degree Programs at Vocational Academies**

(1) Full-time faculty members at vocational academies must meet the hiring requirements for professors at universities of applied sciences pursuant to § 44 of the Higher Education Framework Act in the version of January 19, 1999 (Federal Law Gazette I, p. 19), last amended on May 23, 2017 (Federal Law Gazette I, pp. 1228, 1241). To the extent that courses primarily serve to impart practical skills and knowledge for which the employment requirements for professors at universities of applied sciences are not necessary, these may be assigned to full-time instructors for special tasks in accordance with Section 56 of the Higher Education Framework Act. The proportion of teaching provided by full-time instructors shall not fall below 40 percent. In exceptional cases, this may also include professors at universities of applied sciences or universities who teach at a vocational academy on a part-time basis, provided that they ensure continuity in the course offerings and the consistency of the overall education, as well as the mandatory supervision and advising of students; the fulfillment of these requirements must be separately verified as part of the accreditation of the individual degree program.

(2) Paragraph 1, sentence 1 applies mutatis mutandis to part-time faculty members who offer theory-based courses leading to ECTS credits or who, as examiners

or examiners in the supervision and evaluation of the bachelor's thesis. Courses pursuant to the first sentence may, in exceptional cases, also be offered by part-time faculty members who hold a relevant university degree or an equivalent qualification, as well as subject-specific and pedagogical competence and several years of relevant professional experience in accordance with the requirements of the course.

(3) As part of the accreditation process, the following must also be reviewed:

1. the interaction between the different learning environments (academy and company),
2. the assurance of quality and continuity in the curriculum and in the support and advising of students, given the unique staffing structure at vocational academies, and
3. the existence of a sustainable quality management system that encompasses the various learning locations.

**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, paragraph 5, sentence 1 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 of this Regulation. 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 is given the opportunity to comment prior to the Accreditation Council's decision if the Accreditation Council intends to deviate significantly from the evaluators' 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 full theological and partial theological degree programs, the decision of the Accreditation Council requires the approval of the competent church authorities.

### **§ 23 Documents to be Submitted**

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

1. a 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 system accreditation, the audit report refers to the evidence specified in paragraphs 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 institution commissions an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council in accordance with Article 5, Paragraph 3, Item 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation to evaluate the formal and substantive criteria and to prepare an accreditation report. For Catholic theological degree programs that qualify students for the priesthood or the profession of pastoral assistant (“full theological degree program”), the evaluation is conducted by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Degree Programs in Germany, which is accredited by the Accreditation Council.

(2) The university provides the agency with a self-evaluation report that contains, at a minimum, information on the university’s quality objectives and on the formal and academic-content criteria in accordance with Parts 2 and 3. The university’s self-evaluation report, in the preparation of which the student council must be involved, is intended for the program acc

The accreditation application shall not exceed 20 pages, and for system and bundle accreditation (§ 30(1)), it shall not exceed 50 pages.

(3) The review report is prepared by the Agency; for degree programs under Section 25(1), sentences 3 and 4, the review report requires the approval of the persons designated therein. The relevant standards for the review report are the formal criteria set forth in Part 2. It shall include a recommendation regarding compliance with the formal criteria. The review report shall 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 in accordance with § 25. The expert panel receives the review report referred to in paragraph 3. The relevant standards for the expert opinion are the academic and content-related criteria set forth in Part 3. It includes a recommendation regarding compliance with the academic 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. one student with relevant expertise.

In the accreditation of degree programs that qualify students for admission to the preparatory service for a teaching career, a representative of the authority responsible for the school system shall take the place of the person referred to in sentence 2, item 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 students 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 sentence 2, number 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, paragraph 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) In the case of system accreditation, the agencies' expert panel shall consist of at least five persons. It shall be composed of

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

Paragraph 1, sentences 3 through 5, applies accordingly.

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

(4) The reviewers shall be appointed by the agency commissioned to prepare the accreditation report. In making the appointment, the agency shall be 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 Program Accreditation.

(5) The following persons are ineligible to serve as reviewers:

1. is employed by or enrolled at the institution submitting the application for accreditation,
2. is employed by or enrolled at one of the institutions participating in cooperative degree programs or joint degree programs, or
3. is considered biased according to the customary rules of academia.

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

## **§ 26**

### **Validity Period of Accreditation, Extension**

(1) 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 degree program in question. When applying for a cluster 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 twelve months shall generally 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 requirement must be provided to the Accreditation Council.

## **§ 28 Obligation to Report Changes**

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

only possible at disproportionate expense, and it is evident that disclosure is in the interest of the person concerned. Sentences 1 and 2 apply mutatis mutandis to internal accreditation decisions by system-accredited universities.

### **§ 30 Bundled Accreditation, Partial System Accreditation**

(1) In the case of an application for accreditation of various degree programs that exhibit a high degree of disciplinary affinity beyond mere affiliation with a disciplinary field (humanities and cultural studies, social sciences, or natural sciences) (bundled accreditation), the expert panel's report pursuant to § 24(4) may cover multiple degree programs. The subject-specific criteria set forth in 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 practicable,
2. the subunit's quality management system is integrated into the institution, and
3. at least one degree program of the subunit has already gone through this system.

### **Section 31 Random Sampling**

(1) In the case of system accreditation and partial system accreditation, the accreditation committee 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 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 university's range of disciplines in its teaching.

(3) If the institution offers degree programs that also prepare students for a regulated profession, one such program must additionally be included in the sample, taking into account the criteria in Parts 2 and 3 that pertain to degree programs; The same applies in the case of teacher training programs, with one program from each type of teaching qualification offered, as well as for programs in Protestant or Catholic theology/religion. A 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 authority responsible for the school system or the respective church body, shall participate in the selection of the sample as well as in each individual program accreditation within the scope of the sample.

## **Part 5 Procedural Rules for Special Forms of Study Programs**

### **§ 32 Combined degree programs**

(1) If students select individual subjects from a larger number of subjects permitted for the program, each of these subjects constitutes a sub-program as part of a combined 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 lists all sub-programs or subjects included in the accreditation. In the event of an addition to the accreditation pursuant to paragraph 3, a new accreditation certificate must 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 in accordance with Parts 2 and 3 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-report by the cooperating institutions, which in particular contains information on the respective national framework conditions and highlights the specific characteristics 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 institutions 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 review panel represents expertise in the relevant subjects and disciplines, including the labor market/working world in the relevant fields, and 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, finality, and, where applicable, demonstrated fulfillment of conditions, and
7. the Agency has published the expert opinion and the evaluation on its website in German and English.

§ 22, paragraphs 2, 3, and paragraph 4, sentence 1; § 26, paragraph 1, sentence 1, and paragraph 2, sentence 1; and §§ 28 and 29 apply mutatis mutandis. Notwithstanding § 26(1), first sentence, and (2), second sentence, the accreditation period is 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 offered by a domestic institution of higher education in collaboration with one or more non-European cooperation partners,

If programs are coordinated and offered in cooperation with non-European partners, paragraph 1 shall apply mutatis mutandis upon request by the domestic institution, provided that the non-European partners commit in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution 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 Accreditation**

**§ 34**  
**Alternative Accreditation Procedures**

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

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

(3) The implementation of alternative procedures requires the prior approval of the Accreditation Council and the authority responsible for higher education. The Accreditation Council may commission an external review. The application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council through the authority responsible for higher education. The Accreditation Council may, in consultation with the state, refuse its approval 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 the principles for the appropriate involvement of the academic community 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 Accreditation.

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

(5) The alternative procedure shall be limited to a maximum of eight years. Section 22(4), sentence 2, and Section 26(3), sentence 3, shall apply mutatis mutandis. It shall be monitored by the Accreditation Council and, as a rule, evaluated by an independent, science-oriented institution two years prior to the expiration of the project period.

**Part 7**  
**Miscellaneous**

**Section 35**  
**Connection with procedures concerning the suitability of a degree program**

## **suitability of a degree program**

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

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

## **§ 36 Evaluation**

(1) Three years after this regulation enters into force, its application and effects shall be reviewed.

(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.

## **§ 37 Entry into Force**

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

Hamburg, December 6, 2018.

**The Ministry of Science, Research, and Gender Equality**