

163 **Regulation**  
**Regulating Program Accreditation (Program**  
**Accreditation Regulation – StAkkrV)**

Dated July 30, 2018

Pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 through 4, of the State Treaty on Program Accreditation, which was incorporated into state law by the Act of September 20, 2017 (Official Gazette I, p. 902), the State Government hereby enacts the following:

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**Part 1 General  
Provisions**

**§ 1  
Scope**

(1) This Regulation, based on Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, specifies the details regarding the formal criteria under Article 2(2), the subject-matter and content criteria under Article 2(3), and the procedure under Article 3 of 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-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.

(3) This regulation does not apply to degree programs that conclude with a state examination, nor to the degree programs offered by the Saar College of Music and the Saar College of Fine Arts.

**§ 2  
Forms of Accreditation**

Forms of accreditation include the procedures under 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 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 that lead directly to a master's degree are excluded.

(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 a maximum of five years (ten semesters). Longer standard durations of study are possible in exceptional cases, provided the program is structured accordingly, 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.

**§ 4  
Program Profiles**

(1) Master's degree programs can be distinguished as "application-oriented" and "research-oriented." The respective profile must be specified in the accreditation.

(2) When establishing a bachelor's program, it must be determined whether it is an undergraduate or continuing education program; when establishing a master's program, it must be determined whether it is a consecutive or continuing education program. Continuing education Bachelor's and Master's degree programs must comply with the requirements regarding the standard period of study and the thesis as set forth for undergraduate Bachelor's degree programs or consecutive Master's degree programs, and they must lead to the same level of qualification and the same entitlements.

(3) Bachelor's and Master's degree programs must include a thesis that demonstrates the ability to independently address a problem within the respective field using scientific 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 master's programs, the professional university degree may be replaced by an aptitude test. Continuing education master's programs generally require at least one year of qualified professional experience.

(2) In all other respects, admission to master's programs is governed by Section 77(6) of the Saarland Higher Education Act of November 30, 2016 (Official Gazette I, p. 1080), as amended.

**§ 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 the master's degree—may be awarded, unless the program is a multiple-degree program. Degrees are not differentiated based on the standard duration of study.

(2) The following designations 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 content is relevant,

the subject group of economic sciences, as well as in applied arts programs,

2. Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) in the subject groups of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Medicine, Agricultural, Forestry, and Nutritional Sciences, and in the subject groups of Engineering and Economics where the program content is appropriately aligned,
3. Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.) and Master of Engineering (M.Eng.) in the Engineering subject group, provided the program's content is aligned accordingly, and
4. Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) in the subject area of law.

Specialized additions to degree titles and bilingual degree titles are not permitted. Bachelor's degrees with the suffix "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, bachelor's and master's degrees that differ from the aforementioned titles may also be used.

(3) The degree documents may clarify, in an appropriate place, that the qualification level of the bachelor's degree corresponds to a diploma degree at universities of applied sciences and 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 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 delimited 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 particularly justified exceptional cases, a module may also extend over more than two semesters.

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

1. the module's content and learning outcomes,
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),
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 competencies required for successful participation, as well as guidelines for appropriate preparation by students. 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 awarding 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 ECTS credits are to be used as the basis per semester. One ECTS 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 requirements specified in the examination regulations are met. 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 for the Bachelor's degree. For the Master's degree, 300 ECTS credits are required, taking into account the prior 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.

(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.

(4) In justified exceptional cases, up to 75 ECTS credits per academic year may be applied to degree programs with special academic organizational measures. In such cases, the workload for one ECTS credit is calculated as 30 hours. Special organizational measures may relate in particular to the learning environment and supervision, the structure of the program, academic planning, and measures to ensure financial support.

(5) At vocational academies, a three-year program leading to a bachelor's degree generally requires the completion of 180 ECTS credits. The theoretical component of the program must not be less than 120 ECTS credits, and the practical component must 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, including non-higher-education learning locations and course components as well as the language(s) of instruction, must be contractually regulated and described on the university's website. When applying credit transfer models within the framework of program-related 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 future 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 from 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 on the Convention of April 11, 1997, on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in the European Region of May 16, 2007 (Federal Law Gazette 2007 II, pp. 712, 713) (Lisbon Convention). The ECTS applies in accordance with Sections 7 and 8(1), and the distribution of credit points must be regulated. For a bachelor's degree, 180 to 240 ECTS credits must be demonstrated, and for a master's degree, no fewer than 60 ECTS credits. Essential program information must be published and must be accessible to students at all times.

(3) If a joint 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 have committed themselves 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 Sections 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 must be clearly formulated and must demonstrably take into account the objectives 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 academic and scientific requirements must encompass the aspects of knowledge and understanding (broadening, deepening, and comprehending knowledge), the application, use, and generation of knowledge (utilization and transfer, scientific innovation), communication and cooperation, as well as scientific self-awareness and professionalism, and must be consistent with the level of the degree awarded.

(3) Bachelor's degree programs serve to impart scientific foundations, methodological competence, and profession-specific qualifications, ensuring a broad scientific grounding. Consecutive Master's degree programs are to be designed as programs that deepen, broaden, or are interdisciplinary or in a different field. Professional Master's degree programs require qualified professional experience of generally no less than one year. The program design of professional master's programs must take professional experience into account and build upon it to achieve the qualification objectives. In the program design, the institution must demonstrate the connection between professional qualifications and the program offerings, as well as the equivalence of the requirements to consecutive master's programs.

**§ 12**

**Coherent Program Concept and Adequate Implementation**

(1) The curriculum must be structured appropriately, taking into account the specified entry qualifications and with a view to the attainability of the qualification objectives. The qualification objectives, the program title, the degree and its designation, and the module concept must be consistent with one another. The program concept must offer a diverse range of

teaching and learning methods tailored to the respective academic culture and program format, as well as practical components where appropriate. It creates suitable framework conditions to promote student mobility, enabling students to spend time at other institutions of higher education without losing academic credit. 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 must be 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. To implement these requirements, the institution must take appropriate measures regarding staff selection and qualification.

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

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

(5) It must be ensured that students can complete their studies within the standard period of study. 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 one semester or one year, as validated by regular surveys, and
4. an adequate and workload-appropriate examination frequency and organization, whereby, as a rule, only one examination is to be scheduled per module and modules should have a minimum scope of five ECTS credits.

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

### § 13

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

The timeliness and adequacy of the academic and scientific requirements must be ensured. The academic content and the methodological and didactic approaches of the curriculum must be continuously reviewed and adapted to academic and didactic

. To this end, systematic consideration is given to the academic discourse at the national and, where applicable, international level.

### § 14

#### **Academic Success**

The degree program is to be subject to continuous monitoring with the participation of students and graduates. On this basis, measures to ensure academic success are to be derived. These are to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and the results are to be used for the further development of the degree program. The parties involved shall be informed of the results and the measures taken, in compliance with data protection regulations.

### § 15

#### **Gender Equality and Compensating for Disadvantages**

The university must have policies in place regarding gender equity 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, § 12, paragraph 1, sentences 1 through 3, paragraph 2, sentence 1, paragraphs 3 and 4, and § 14 apply *mutatis mutandis*. In addition, the following applies:

1. The admission requirements and selection procedures must be appropriate to the level and the academic discipline in which the degree program is situated;
2. it must 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 L 255, September 30, 2005, p. 22), as last amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of November 20, 2013 (OJ L 354, Dec. 28, 2013, p. 132);
4. In providing academic support, designing the degree program, and implementing teaching and learning methods, the diversity of students and their needs must be respected, and the specific requirements of mobile students must be taken into account;
5. The university's quality management system must ensure compliance with the provisions set forth above and those specified in Section 17.

(2) If a joint degree program is coordinated and offered by the institution in collaboration with one or more institutions in foreign countries

that do not belong to the European Higher Education Area (non-European cooperation partners), paragraph 1 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* upon application by the institution if the non-European cooperation partners agree in the cooperation agreement with the 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(1).

### § 17

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

(1) The university must have 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 specified in Parts 2 and 3. The institution must define decision-making processes, authorities, and responsibilities for the establishment, review, further development, and discontinuation of degree programs, as well as the institution's own procedures for the accreditation of degree programs within the framework of its quality management system, and publish these institution-wide.

(2) The quality management system is developed with the participation of the university's constituent groups and with the involvement of external expertise. 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 must regularly review and continuously improve its functionality and effectiveness with regard to the quality of study programs.

### § 18

#### Measures for Implementing the Quality Management Concept

(1) The quality management system must ensure regular evaluations of the degree programs and the service areas relevant to teaching and studies by internal and external students, academic experts from outside the university, representatives of professional practice, and graduates. If a need for action becomes apparent, the necessary measures must be taken and implemented.

(2) If, on the basis of the university's quality management system, evaluations of bachelor's and master's degree programs with Protestant or Catholic theology as a combined or core subject are also conducted, the participation

The notification and consent requirements under Section 25, paragraph 1, sentence 3, apply accordingly.

(3) The data required for the implementation of the quality management system must be collected regularly across the entire institution.

(4) The institution must document the evaluation of the degree programs by the internal quality management system, including the opinions of external stakeholders, and regularly inform members of the institution, the public, the highest state authority responsible for science, and, in the case of private institutions, the sponsoring body of the measures taken. The public shall be informed of the accreditation decisions made on the basis of the institution's internal procedure, and the information required for publication pursuant to § 29 shall be made available to the Accreditation Council.

### § 19

#### Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions

If the institution offers a degree program in cooperation with a non-higher-education institution, the institution is responsible for 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 the institution enters into a program-specific cooperation with another institution, the degree-granting institution or institutions must ensure the implementation and quality of the program concept. The nature and scope of the cooperation must be described, and the agreements underlying the cooperation must 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 Section 22(4), sentence 2, provided that it is itself authorized to confer degrees and ensures the implementation and quality of the program concept. Paragraph 1, sentence 2, applies *mutatis mutandis*.

(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 § 41 of the Saarland Higher Education Act. To the extent that courses are primarily designed to impart practical skills and knowledge for which the hiring requirements for professors at universities of applied sciences are not necessary, these may be assigned to full-time faculty members for special tasks, for whom the hiring requirements of § 46, paragraph 3, sentence 2, and paragraph 4 of the Saarland Higher Education Act apply accordingly. The proportion of instruction provided by full-time faculty members who meet the appointment requirements applicable to professors shall not be less than 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 curriculum and consistency in the overall education program, as well as mandatory student supervision and advising; the fulfillment of these requirements must be separately verified as part of the accreditation process for the individual degree program.

(2) The first sentence of paragraph 1 applies *mutatis mutandis* to part-time faculty members who offer theory-based courses leading to ECTS credits or who serve as examiners in the supervision and evaluation of the bachelor's thesis. Courses as described in 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 locations (study academy and company),
2. the assurance of quality and continuity in the course offerings and in the support and advising of students against the backdrop of the specific personnel 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 shall decide on accreditation at the request of the institution by determining compliance with the formal criteria and the academic and content-related criteria pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 5, sentence 1 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3. The basis for the decision regarding the formal criteria is an audit report pursuant to § 24, paragraph 3. The basis for the decision regarding the subject-specific and content-related criteria is an expert opinion pursuant to § 24(4).

(2) The decision shall be issued in writing. It must be substantiated.

(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 of higher education is granted the right to award the Accreditation Council's seal itself for the degree programs it has reviewed.

(5) In the case of 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. Self-evaluation report of the institution,
2. an accreditation report from an agency approved 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 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, and
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**  
**Appointment of an agency;**  
**Accreditation report; site visit**

(1) The institution shall commission an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council pursuant to Article 5, paragraph 3, item 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation to assess the formal and subject-specific criteria and to prepare an accreditation report.

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

(3) The review report is prepared by the Agency; for degree programs under Section 25(1), third sentence, the review report requires the approval of the persons designated therein. The formal criteria set forth in Part 2 serve as the relevant standards for the review report. 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 submitted by the expert panel pursuant to

§ 25. The review 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 contains a recommendation regarding compliance with the subject-matter 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 evaluation committee 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 evaluation committee 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, and
3. one student with expertise in the relevant field.

In the accreditation of bachelor's and master's degree programs with the combined or core subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, the person referred to in item 2 is replaced by a representative of the competent church authority. For the degree programs referred to in sentence 3, 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 field of teaching,
2. a representative from the professional field, and
3. one student.

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

(5) The following persons are excluded from serving as evaluators:

1. is employed by or enrolled at the institution submitting the application for accreditation,
2. are employed by or enrolled at one of the institutions participating in cooperative degree programs or joint degree programs, or
3. are 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 program is discontinued, the accreditation may be extended for students still enrolled at the expiration of the accreditation period. 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 bundle 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 request by the institution.

(3) Proof of compliance with this 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 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 consent of the data subject is not possible or only possible with disproportionate effort and it is evident that the disclosure is in the interest of the data subject. Sentences 1 and 2 apply mutatis mutandis to internal accreditation decisions of system-accredited institutions of higher education.

**§ 30**  
**Bundled Accreditation; Partial System Accreditation**

(1) The report of the review panel pursuant to § 24(4) may cover multiple degree programs if they exhibit a high degree of disciplinary affinity that goes beyond mere affiliation with a disciplinary field (humanities and cultural studies, social sciences, or natural sciences) (bundled accreditation). 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 request of the institution, 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 university responsible for academic affairs 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 university, and
3. at least one degree program within the unit has already undergone this system.

**§ 31**  
**Random Sampling**

(1) In the case of system accreditation and sub-system accreditation, the review panel shall conduct a random sample in accordance with § 25(2). The random sample shall verify whether the intended effects of the quality management system under review are achieved at the program level.

(2) The subject of the random sample is

1. the consideration of all criteria in accordance with Parts 2 and 3 within a degree program that has gone through the university'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, then

to include in the sample an additional program, taking into account the criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3 that pertain to degree programs; the same applies to degree 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 respective church body.

**Part 5 Procedural  
Rules for Special  
forms of study programs**

**§ 32  
Combined degree programs**

(1) If students select individual courses from a larger number of permissible 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 must 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 change the accreditation period for the combined degree program.

(4) The accreditation certificate shall list all degree programs or fields of study covered by 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 conduct of the procedure was notified to the Accreditation Council prior to the start of the procedure,

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 of at least the following:
  - 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 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.

Section 22(2), (3), and (4), first sentence, and Section 26(1), first sentence

and the first sentence of paragraph 2, as well as sections 28 and 29, shall apply *mutatis mutandis*. Notwithstanding § 26(1), first sentence, and § 26(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 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, 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 quality in studies and teaching may also be implemented in accordance with Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation.

(2) Alternative procedures must comply with the criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3. The provisions of Article 3(2), first sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, as well as the principles governing appropriate academic participation set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in this Regulation, shall apply mutatis mutandis; likewise, the requirements for participation and consent pursuant to § 25(1), third sentence, shall apply mutatis mutandis.

(3) The implementation of alternative procedures requires the prior approval of the Accreditation Council and the highest state authority responsible for academic affairs; the Accreditation Council may arrange for an external review. The application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council via the highest state authority responsible for academic affairs. The Accreditation Council may, in consultation with the highest state authority responsible for science, refuse its approval only if the alternative procedure does not comply with the requirements of Article 2 and the provisions of Article 3(2), sentence 1, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, as well as the principles for appropriate participation of the scientific community set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in this regulation. State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in this ordinance. The alternative procedure shall be suitable for gaining fundamental insights into alternative approaches to external quality assurance beyond the procedures specified in Article 3, paragraph 1, items 1 and 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(4) The university must apply the rules of procedure developed by the Accreditation Council in each case, which regulate, in particular, 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 project period expires.

**Part 7**  
**Miscellaneous**

**Section 35**  
**Eligibility under professional licensing law**

(1) Accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1) No. 1 and Article 3(1) No. 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 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), 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.

Saarbrücken, July 30, 2018

**The Government of the**  
**Saarland: The Minister-**  
**President**

Hans

**The Minister for Economic Affairs,**  
**Labor, Energy, and Transportation**

Rehlinger

**The Minister of Finance and European**  
**Affairs The Minister of Justice**

Strobel

**The Minister of the Interior, Construction, and**  
**Sports**

Bouillon

**The Minister of Social Affairs, Health,**  
**Women, and Family**

Bachmann

**The Minister of Education and Culture**

Commerçon

**The Minister of the Environment and Consumer**  
**Protection**

Jost