

**To the managing directors of the
agencies**

Phone: 0228 - 338306-0
Fax: 0228 - 338306-79
akr@akkreditierungsrat.de
www.akkreditierungsrat.de

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**- by email only -
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Bonn, January 30,

Options for extending deadlines under the new and previous legal framework

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries regarding requests to adjust or extend accreditation periods for degree programs. We would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the available extension options and the circumstances under which they apply.

Extension options for accreditation periods under the new legal framework

Section 26(3) of the Model Regulation pursuant to Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation (Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated December 7, 2017) or future regulations with identical content in the ordinances to be enacted by the states contain extension options, some of which were already included in a similar form in the previous regulations, while others differ from them.

The provision allowing agencies to grant provisional accreditations in accordance with Section 3.3.1 of the “Rules for the Accreditation of Degree Programs and for Institutional Accreditation” (Resolution of the Accreditation Council, as amended on February 20, 2013) is no longer included in the current regulations. However, pursuant to Section 26(2) of the Model Statute, it is sufficient if the accreditation application is submitted to the Accreditation Council in a timely manner before the expiration of the accreditation period. If the Accreditation Council’s decision is made after the expiration of the accreditation period, it takes effect retroactively, so that no gaps in accreditation arise.

The previous Section 3.3.2 of the Accreditation Council's rules essentially corresponds to Section 26(3), first sentence, of the Model Statute. The previous Section 7.3.2 of the Accreditation Council's Rules essentially corresponds to the provision in Section 26(3, sentences 2 and 3 of the Model Statute, which provides for the extension of accreditation periods for degree programs with the aim of giving higher education institutions time to transition to system accreditation and to evaluate the degree programs through the internal quality management system.

The previous regulations did not include the additional option provided for in section 26(3), sentences 2 and 3, to align the accreditation deadlines for degree programs to be accredited as a bundle. Until now, the only option in such cases was to obtain case-by-case approvals from the Accreditation Council upon application by an agency.

Due to the new division of responsibilities between the Accreditation Council and the agencies, a distinction is made between the expiration of deadlines during an agency's evaluation (Section 26(3), second sentence) and during the administrative proceedings before the Accreditation Council (Section 26(3), third sentence).

Section 26(3), sentences 2 and 3, apply to all bundled and system accreditation procedures for which contracts were or will be concluded as of the beginning of 2018. This also applies if contracts were concluded under the old law for degree programs whose accreditation periods are to be extended.

The mutual termination of an existing contract by the institution and the Agency is permitted in order to enable the accreditation of multiple degree programs in a bundled procedure under the new law.

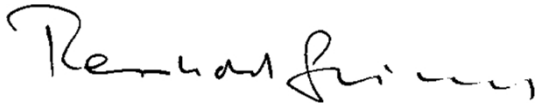
Extensions of accreditation deadlines under current law

The extension options under the current legal framework (Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, as well as Sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 of the Accreditation Council's Rules) generally still apply to all accreditation and reaccreditation agreements concluded by the end of 2017. As explained, the applicability of Section 26(3), sentences 2 and 3, of the Model Statute depends on whether the relevant cluster or system accreditation procedure was or will be concluded under the previous or the new law.

In addition, in exceptional cases, the Accreditation Council may continue to grant an agency permission to extend an accreditation period granted under the previous law. This may be necessary if a higher education institution has waited to initiate a reaccreditation process until the new legal framework comes into effect

and—for example, in the expectation that Section 3.3.1 of the old law will remain in effect—is therefore no longer able to complete a reaccreditation process in time before the accreditation period expires. In such cases, however, these are decisions made on a case-by-case basis and have no precedential effect.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reinhold R. Grimm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Prof. Dr. Reinhold R. Grimm