

Board Resolution on Deadline Extensions for Accreditations Under the Old Law

June 6, 2018

The Accreditation Council is currently receiving an increasing number of reports that program accreditations under the new law cannot be completed in time before the end of the accreditation period.

There are two reasons for this: First, the current regulations no longer include the option for agencies to grant provisional accreditation for degree programs pursuant to Section 3.3.1 of the “Rules for the Accreditation of Degree Programs and for System Accreditation” as amended on February 20, 2013. The new legal framework stipulates that universities are responsible for initiating an immediate follow-up accreditation before the expiration of the accreditation period (Section 26(2), second sentence).

On the other hand, the procedural processes for reaccreditation under the new law are only gradually being established. Among other things, the so-called “deficiency rectification loop” at the agencies—which is intended to reduce the conditions to be imposed by the Accreditation Council—is leading to changes in workflows.

Consequently, there is currently widespread concern that reaccreditations for degree programs whose accreditation expires on August 31 or September 30, 2019, may not be completed in time.

In a circular dated January 30, 2018, the Chair of the Foundation has already informed the agencies about options for extending deadlines under both the new and previous legal frameworks. Accordingly, as an exception, it is provided that an extension of the accreditation deadline may be granted at the request of an agency under the old law. A higher education institution may make use of this option, for example, if it waited for the new legal framework to take effect in the expectation that Section 3.3.1 of the old law would remain in force and is therefore no longer able to complete a reaccreditation process in time before the accreditation period expires. This option was initially intended for accreditations expiring in 2018.

However, in order to avoid any gaps in accreditation during the transition to the new law, the Executive Board has decided to make this extension option under the old law available also for

degree programs whose accreditation periods expire on August 31 or September 30, 2019. Such an extension may generally be granted for one semester or a maximum of one year.

The application must be submitted in the usual manner through the responsible agency. It should clearly state the reasons why accreditation cannot be completed in time within the original deadline. If an extension of one year (rather than one semester) is requested, the necessity must be specifically demonstrated.