

Amended version of the Model Statute pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1–4

State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation

Part 1 General Provisions

Section 1 Scope

(1) This Regulation, based on Article 4 of the State Treaty on the Organization of a Joint Accreditation System for Quality Assurance in Studies and Teaching at German Universities (State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation; GVBl.) the details regarding the formal criteria under Article 2(2), the subject-specific and content-related criteria under Article 2(3), and the procedure under Article 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(2) ¹ Unless otherwise specified in this regulation, the following provisions on program accreditation also apply to degree programs at state-run and state-recognized vocational academies leading to the degree of Bachelor. ² A Bachelor's degree accredited on the basis of this (model) 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) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation (system accreditation), pursuant to Article 3(1)(2) (program accreditation), or alternative accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(3).

Part 2 Formal Criteria for Degree Programs

§ 3 Program Structure and Duration, Recognition, and Credit Transfer

(1) ¹In a tiered degree program system, the bachelor's degree is the first standard degree conferring professional qualifications; the master's degree constitutes a further higher education degree conferring professional qualifications. ²Undergraduate degree programs leading directly to a master's degree are excluded, with the exception of the degree programs specified in paragraph 3.

(2) ¹ 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. ² For bachelor's programs, the standard duration of study for full-time study is at least three years. ³ For consecutive degree programs, the total standard period of study for full-time study is five years (ten semesters). ⁴ If state law provides for it, shorter and longer standard periods of study are

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. ⁵ Notwithstanding sentence 3, in the core artistic disciplines at universities of the arts and music, consecutive bachelor's and master's degree programs may also be established with a standard duration 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 studies") need not be structured in stages and may have a standard period of study of ten semesters.

(4) The institution implements national and state regulations regarding the recognition of competencies, qualifications, and academic achievements obtained at a higher education institution, as well as the transfer of competencies and qualifications acquired outside of higher education institutions.

§ 4 Program Profiles

(1) ¹ Master's degree programs may be -according to "application-oriented" or "research-oriented" profile -in- "application-oriented" and "research-oriented." ² Master's programs at colleges of art and music may have a special artistic profile. ³ Master's programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching position have a specific teaching-related profile. ⁴ If the institution defines a profile, this ~~The respective profile must be~~ specified in the accreditation.

(2) ¹When establishing a master's program, it must be determined whether it is a consecutive or a professional master's program. ²Professional master's programs correspond to consecutive master's programs in terms of the standard duration of study and the thesis requirements, and lead to the same level of qualification and the same entitlements.

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

§ 5 Admission Requirements and Transitions Between Programs

(1) ¹ The admission requirement for a master's program is a first professional higher education degree. ² For professional and artistic master's programs, the professional degree may be replaced by an entrance examination, provided that state law so provides. ³ Professional master's programs ~~generally~~ require at least one year of qualified professional experience; exceptions may be made for individual students in justified cases.

(2) ¹ To be admitted to artistic master's degree programs, applicants must demonstrate the specific artistic aptitude required for such programs. ² For admission to continuing education artistic master's degree programs, professional practical activities completed during the course of study may also be taken into account, provided that state law permits this. ³ The requirement for professional practical experience does not apply at art colleges for programs designed to deepen independent artistic skills, provided that state law so provides.

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

§ 6 Degrees and Degree Titles

(1) ¹ Upon successful completion of a Bachelor's or Master's program, only one degree—the Bachelor's or Master's degree—shall be conferred, unless it is a multiple-degree program. ² In this context, degrees shall not be differentiated based on the standard duration of study.

(2) ¹ 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 program's content warrants, 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 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 field of engineering, provided the program focuses on relevant subject matter,
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 subject group of Music,
7. ¹ Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) for degree programs that provide the educational requirements for a teaching position. ² For a multidisciplinary degree program, a designation in accordance with items 1 through 7 may be provided based on the program's content focus.

² Subject-specific additions to degree titles and bilingual degree titles are prohibited. ³ Bachelor's degrees with the addition "honors" ("B.A. hon.") are prohibited. ⁴ For interdisciplinary and combined degree programs, the degree title is determined by the subject area that predominates in the program. ⁵ For continuing education programs, master's degrees that differ from the aforementioned titles may also be used. ⁶ 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) The degree documents may clarify, in an appropriate place, that the qualification level of the bachelor's degree corresponds to a diploma from a university of applied sciences, or that the qualification level of a master's degree corresponds to a diploma from a university or equivalent institution of higher education.

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

§ 7 Modularization

(1) ¹ Degree programs shall be structured into study units (modules) that are defined thematically and temporally by grouping together intended learning outcomes and course content. ² The intended learning outcomes and ~~course content~~ of a module shall be designed such that they can generally

can generally be taught within a maximum of two consecutive semesters; in exceptionally justified cases, a module may also extend over more than two semesters. ³ For the core artistic subject in the bachelor's program, at least two modules are mandatory, which may account for approximately two-thirds of the total study time.

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

1. ~~intended learning outcomes and course content~~ Content and qualification objectives of the module,
2. Teaching and learning methods,
3. Prerequisites for participation,
4. ~~Applicability of the module,~~
45. Requirements for the awarding of ECTS credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS credits),
56. ECTS credits and grading,
67. Frequency of the module's offering,
87. Workload and
98. Duration of the module.

(3) ¹ The prerequisites for participation must specify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful participation, as well as guidance for appropriate preparation by students. ~~² Regarding the applicability of the module, 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.~~ ²³ The requirements for the awarding of ECTS credits must specify how a module can be successfully completed (type, scope, and duration of the examination).

§ 8 Credit Point System

(1) ¹ Each module shall be assigned a specific number of ECTS credits based on the workload for students. ² As a rule, 30 credits shall be allocated per semester. ³ One credit corresponds to a total student workload of 25 to a maximum of 30 hours of in-class and self-study. ⁴ ECTS credits are awarded for a module , if the in of the examination regulations

the required coursework must be demonstrated. ⁵ The awarding of ECTS credits does not necessarily require an examination, but rather the successful completion of the respective module.

(2) ¹ A minimum of 180 ECTS credits must be earned to qualify for a Bachelor's degree. ² For the Master's degree, 300 ECTS credits are required, taking into account the prior studies up to the first professionally qualifying degree. ³ 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. ⁴ For consecutive Bachelor's and Master's programs in 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) ¹ 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. ² 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) ¹ In justified exceptional cases, up to 75 ECTS credits per academic year may be applied for degree programs with special academic organizational measures. ² In this context, the workload for one ECTS credit is calculated at 30 hours. ³ Special academic organizational measures may relate in particular to the learning environment and supervision, the structure of the program, academic planning, and measures to ensure the student's livelihood.

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

(6) ¹ At vocational academies, a bachelor's degree program lasting three years generally requires the completion of 180 ECTS credits. ² 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) 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, are contractually regulated and described on the university's website. ² 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) ¹A 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 or a double or multiple 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 Sections 10, 16, and 33 apply to these degree programs. ³ The implementation of the criteria in paragraph 1, items 1 through 5, shall be reviewed.

(2) ¹ Qualifications and periods of study shall be 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). ² The ECTS is applied in accordance with Sections 7 and 8(1), and the distribution of credit points is regulated. ³ For the Bachelor's degree, 180 to 240 credit points must be demonstrated, and for the Master's degree, no fewer than 60 credit points. ⁴ Essential program information is published

and accessible to students at all times. ⁵ In all other respects, the provisions of Part 2 do not apply.

(3) If a joint--degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education in collaboration with one or more institutions of higher education from countries outside the European Higher Education Area (non-European cooperation partners), then, upon application by the domestic institution, paragraphs 1 and 2 shall apply mutatis mutandis if the non-European cooperation partners agree in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution to undergo accreditation in accordance with the criteria and procedural rules set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 as well as in §§ 16(1) and § 33(1).

Part 3 Academic and Content-Related Criteria for Degree Programs and Quality Management Systems

§ 11 Qualification Objectives and Degree Level

(1) ¹ The qualification objectives and the intended learning outcomes shall be clearly formulated, publicly accessible, and shall 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. ² The dimension of personal development also encompasses the future civic, political, and cultural roles of graduates. ³ 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 professional and scientific/artistic requirements encompass the aspects of knowledge and understanding (expansion, deepening, and comprehension of knowledge), the application, use, and generation of knowledge/art (utilization and transfer, scientific innovation), communication and cooperation as well as scientific/artistic self-awareness and professionalism, and are consistent with the level of the degree awarded.

(3) ¹Bachelor's degree programs are designed to impart foundational academic knowledge, methodological skills, and profession-specific qualifications, and ensure a broad academic or artistic education. ²Consecutive Master's degree programs are structured as programs that deepen, broaden, or are interdisciplinary in nature, or that focus on different subject areas. ³Professional Master's degree programs require qualified professional experience

of at least one year. ⁴ The curriculum for professional master's programs takes professional experience into account and builds upon it to achieve the program's qualification objectives. ⁵ In designing the program, the institution shall demonstrate the connection between professional qualifications and the program offerings, as well as the equivalence of the requirements to those of consecutive master's programs. ⁶ Artistic programs promote and further develop the ability for artistic creation.

§ 12 Coherent Program Concept and Adequate Implementation

(1) ¹ The curriculum is structured appropriately, taking into account the specified entry qualifications and with a view to achieving the qualification objectives. ² The qualification objectives, the program title, the degree and its designation, and the module concept are consistent with one another. ³ The program concept encompasses diverse ~~teaching, learning, and assessment methods~~ adapted to the respective academic culture and program format, as well as practical components where applicable. ⁴ It creates suitable conditions to promote student mobility, enabling students to spend time at other institutions without losing academic progress. ⁵ It actively involves students in the design of teaching and learning processes (student-centered teaching and learning) and provides opportunities for a self-directed course of study. ⁶ ~~The degree program, course structure, examination requirements, module descriptions, and admission requirements—including provisions for compensating for disadvantages for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses—are documented and published.~~

(2) ¹ The curriculum is implemented by teaching staff with sufficient subject-specific and methodological-didactic qualifications. ² The integration of research and teaching is ensured in accordance with the institution's profile, particularly through full-time professors in both undergraduate and graduate programs. ³ 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) ¹ Exams and types of exams enable a meaningful assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. ² They are module-based and competency-oriented.

(5) ¹ The ability to complete the program within the standard period of study is guaranteed. ² This includes, in particular

1. a predictable and reliable academic schedule,
2. the minimal overlap of courses and examinations,
3. a plausible average workload commensurate with the examination load, whereby the learning outcomes of a module must be designed so that they can generally be achieved within a semester or a year, as validated by regular assessments, and
4. an examination density that is adequate and appropriate to the workload and
-organization that is coherently justified in an examination concept and whose appropriateness in terms of workload is regularly evaluated with student input as part of the program's further development in accordance with § 14; Modules should have a scope of at least five ECTS credits, whereby, as a rule, only one examination is scheduled per module and modules should have a scope of at least five ECTS credits.

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

(7) A degree program may be designated and advertised as "dual" if the learning locations (at least a university or vocational academy and a company) are systematically interlinked in terms of content, organization, and contractual arrangements.

§ 13 Academic and Content-Related Design of Degree Programs

(1) ¹ The timeliness and adequacy of the academic and scientific requirements are ensured. ² The academic content and the methodological and didactic approaches of the curriculum are continuously reviewed and adapted to academic and didactic developments. ³ To this end, systematic consideration is given to the academic discourse at the national and, where applicable, international level.

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

(3) ¹ 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. a differentiation of the program and degrees according to teaching positions

are in place. ² Exceptions to sentence 1, items 1 and 2, are permitted for teaching at vocational schools and for master's programs for career changers.

§ 14 Academic Performance

¹ The program is subject to continuous monitoring with the participation of students and graduates. ² Measures to ensure academic success are derived on this basis. ³ These are continuously reviewed, and the results are used for the further development of the program. ⁴ The parties involved are informed of the results and the measures taken, in compliance with data protection regulations.

§ 15 Diversity, Gender Equality, and Equal Opportunity

The university has policies in place to promote diversity, gender equality, and equal opportunities for students in special circumstances, which are implemented at the program level.

§ 16 Special Provisions for Joint-Degree Programs

(1) 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. ² In all other respects, the provisions of Part 3 do not apply. ²³ 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 degree program is situated.
2. It can be demonstrated that the program achieves the intended learning outcomes.
3. To the extent applicable, the provisions of Directive 2005/36/EC of September 7, 2005 ([OJ L 255, September 30, 2005, pp. 22–142](#)) on the recognition of professional qualifications, as last amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of January 17, 2014 ([OJ L 354, December 28, 2013, pp. 132–170](#)) is taken into account.
4. In the supervision, design of the degree program, and the teaching and learning methods used, the diversity of 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 compliance with the above requirements and those specified in § 17.

(2) 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), paragraph 1 shall apply mutatis mutandis upon application by the domestic institution of higher education if the non-European cooperation partners commit in the cooperation agreement with the domestic institution of higher education to accreditation in accordance with the criteria and procedural rules set forth in paragraph 1, as well as in §§ 10(1) and (2) and 33(1).

§ 17 Concept of the Quality Management System of System-Accredited Institutions of Higher Education (Objectives, Processes, Instruments)

(1)¹ The institution has central educational objectives for teaching that are reflected in the institution's mission statement and in the curricula of its degree programs. The institution has a mission statement for teaching that is reflected in the curricula of its degree programs.² 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.³ It ensures the systematic implementation of the requirements specified in Parts 2 and 3.⁴ The university has established 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 and published university-wide. ⁵The university shall establish provisions regarding periods of validity and deadlines in accordance with §§ 26 and 27. ⁶ The university may establish shorter periods of validity and deadlines. ⁷ If a quality management system provides for the formation of clusters, § 30(1) shall apply mutatis mutandis with respect to cluster sizes.

(2) ¹ The quality management system was developed with the participation of the university's constituent groups and with the involvement of external experts. ² It ensures the independence of quality assessments and includes procedures for handling internal conflicts as well as an internal grievance system. ³ 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. ⁴ Functionality and effectiveness with regard to the quality of study programs are regularly reviewed by the university and continuously improved.

§ 18 Measures for Implementing the Quality Management Concept of System-Accredited Institutions of Higher Education

(1) 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 university~~ staff, ~~internal and external~~ students, external academic experts, representatives from the professional field, and graduates; the university may conduct the evaluation of formal criteria independently. ² If a need for action is identified, the necessary measures are taken and implemented.

(2) Provided that, based on the university's quality management system, evaluations are also conducted of teacher education programs, teacher training programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, Protestant theological programs leading to ordination, and other bachelor's and master's programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology, the requirements for participation and approval pursuant to Section 25(1), sentences 3 through 5, shall apply mutatis mutandis.

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

(4) ¹ The university documents the evaluation of the degree programs by the university's internal quality management system, including the opinions

of external stakeholders as well as the measures taken, and ~~regularly~~ informs university members, ~~the public~~, the sponsoring body, and the state where the university is located about the measures taken.² To inform the public, it makes the accreditation decisions and a brief summary of the quality assessment available to the Accreditation Council for publication.~~It informs the public about the accreditation decisions made on the basis of the institution's internal procedure and provides the Accreditation Council with the information required for publication pursuant to § 29.~~³ § 29, sentence 2 applies mutatis mutandis.

Section 19 Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions

¹ If a higher education institution offers a degree program in cooperation with a non-higher-education institution, the higher education institution is responsible for compliance with the requirements set forth in Parts 2 and 3. ² 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 Collaborations

(1) ¹ If a higher education institution enters into a program-specific cooperation with another higher education institution, the degree-granting institution or institutions shall ensure the implementation and quality of the program concept. ² The nature and scope of the cooperation shall be described, and the agreements underlying the cooperation shall be documented.

(2) ¹ If a system-accredited institution of higher education enters into a program-specific cooperation with another institution of higher education, the system-accredited institution may award the program the seal of the Accreditation Council pursuant to § 22 (4), sentence 2, provided that it is itself a degree-granting institution and ensures the implementation and quality of the program concept. ² Paragraph 1, sentence 2, applies mutatis mutandis.

(3) ¹ 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. ² 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) ⁽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, as amended by the announcement of January 19, 1999 (Federal Law Gazette I, p. 18), as last amended by Article ~~16(2)~~ of the Act of May 23, 2017, November 15, 2019 (Federal Law Gazette I, pp. 1228–1622). ² 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 do not apply, these may be assigned to full-time instructors for special tasks in accordance with § 56 of the Higher Education Framework Act and relevant state law. ³ The proportion of instruction provided by full-time instructors shall not be less than 40 percent. ⁴ 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, 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) ¹ 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. ² 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 environments (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 unique 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) ¹ Upon application by the institution of higher education, the Accreditation Council shall decide on accreditation by determining compliance with the formal criteria and the academic and content-related criteria in accordance with Article 3(5), first sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 of this Regulation. ² The basis for the decision regarding the formal criteria is an audit report pursuant to Article 4(3), sentence 1, item 2(b) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. ³ The basis for the decision regarding the academic and content-related criteria is an expert opinion pursuant to Article 3(2), sentence 1, item 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

(2) ¹ The decision shall be issued by means of a ~~written~~ electronic notice. ² It must be substantiated.

(3) ¹ 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. ² The deadline for submitting comments is one month.

(4) ¹ Upon accreditation, the Accreditation Council awards its seal to the degree program or the quality management system. ² 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) ¹ The accreditation of Catholic theological degree programs that qualify students for the priesthood or the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological degree program") shall take place exclusively in the form of program accreditation. ² The decision of the Accreditation Council requires the approval of the competent ecclesiastical authorities for full theological and partial theological degree programs.

§ 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 items 3 and 4,

3. in the case of an application for system accreditation, additional evidence that at least one 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 Appointment of an Agency; Accreditation Report; Site Visit

(1) ¹ The institution shall commission an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council pursuant to Article 5, paragraph 3, sentence 1, item 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation to evaluate the formal and subject-specific criteria and to prepare an accreditation report. ² For Catholic theological degree programs that qualify students for the priesthood and the profession of pastoral assistant ("full theological studies"), the evaluation shall be conducted by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Degree Programs in Germany, which is accredited by the Accreditation Council.

(2) ¹ The institution shall provide the Agency with a self-evaluation report that includes, at a minimum, information on the institution's quality objectives and on the formal and academic criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3. ² The institution's self-evaluation report, in the preparation of which the student representative body must be involved, shall not exceed 20 pages for program accreditation and 50 pages for system and cluster accreditation.

(3) ¹ The review report shall be prepared by the Agency; for degree programs pursuant to § 25(1), sentences 3 and 4, the review report requires the approval of the persons designated therein before being forwarded to the Accreditation Council. ² The formal criteria set forth in Part 2 shall serve as the relevant standards for the review report. ³ It shall contain a recommendation regarding compliance with the formal criteria. ⁴ The review report shall be drafted using the template to be provided by the Accreditation Council. ⁵ The institution shall be informed immediately of any failure to meet a formal criterion.

(4) ¹ The expert opinion shall be issued by the expert panel pursuant to § 25. ² The expert panel shall receive the review report pursuant to paragraph 3. ³ The relevant standards for the expert opinion are the subject-matter and content criteria set forth in Part 3. ⁴ It shall contain a recommendation regarding compliance with the subject-matter and content criteria. ⁵ The report shall be drafted using the template provided by the Accreditation Council and shall not exceed 20 pages for program accreditation and 100 pages for system and cluster accreditation.

(5) ¹ As part of the evaluation of the academic and content-related criteria, the review panel generally conducts an on-site visit. ² 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. ³ The same applies to the reaccreditation of a degree program.

(6) If the report contains recommendations regarding conditions, the institution and the Agency may agree on an additional procedural step to address the issues before submitting the application to the Accreditation Council.

§ 25 Composition of the Review Panel; Requirements for Reviewers

(1) ¹ The review panel of the agencies shall consist of at least four persons for program accreditation. ² It shall be composed as follows:

1. at least two personally university university professors or university professors,
2. a representative from the professional field with expertise in the subject area,
3. a student with relevant expertise.

³ In the accreditation of degree programs that qualify students for admission to the preparatory service for a teaching career, a representative of the highest state authority responsible for the school system shall take the place of the person referred to in paragraph 2; for teacher training programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, a representative of the locally responsible diocese or regional church shall also be included. ⁴ In the accreditation of theological degree programs that qualify students for the pastoral ministry, 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, a representative of the competent ecclesiastical authority shall take the place of the person referred to in paragraph 2. ⁵ For the degree programs mentioned in sentences 3 and 4, the submission of the expert opinion pursuant to § 24(4), sentence 1, requires the consent of the persons named in each case; without this consent, the expert opinion shall not be submitted to the Accreditation Council.

(2) ¹ In the case of system accreditation, the agencies’ expert panel shall consist of at least five persons. ² It shall be composed as follows:

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.

(3) ¹ University faculty members hold the majority of votes. ² In each review panel, the majority of reviewers must have experience with accreditation. ³ In the case of institutional accreditation, the majority of reviewers must have experience with institutional accreditation.

(4) ¹ The reviewers shall be appointed by the agency commissioned to prepare the accreditation report. ² In making these appointments, the agency is bound by the procedure to be developed by the German Rectors’ Conference pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 3, sentence 3 of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation.

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

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. are considered biased according to the customary rules of academia.

(6) ¹ The Agency shall notify the institution of higher education of the composition of the review panel prior to appointing the reviewers. ² The institution of higher education has the right to submit comments within a period of two weeks.

§ 26 Validity Period of Accreditation; Extension

(1) ¹ The initial accreditation is valid for a period of eight years from the start of the semester or trimester in which the accreditation decision is announced. ² If, in the case of program accreditation, the degree program has not yet been launched, the accreditation shall take 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) ¹ Before the expiration of the accreditation period, an application for immediate renewal of accreditation (reaccreditation) must be submitted and initiated; if successful, this renewal shall follow immediately upon the expiration of the previous accreditation. ² If the application is submitted in a timely manner as defined herein, the accreditation shall be extended for the duration of the administrative proceedings. ³ Reaccreditation takes effect no later than the start of the second semester or trimester following the announcement of the accreditation decision. ²⁴ Reaccreditations are valid for a period of eight years.

(3) ¹ The validity period of the accreditation may be extended for a total period of up to two years if

1. in the case of program accreditation, the institution is preparing an application for a cluster or system accreditation that includes the respective degree program, or
2. the institution requests an extension of the deadline in justified exceptional cases that are wholly or partly beyond the institution's control; the extraordinary extension of the deadline in individual cases shall be credited toward the next accreditation period.

²If an application for institutional accreditation has been submitted, the accreditation of degree programs whose accreditation expires during the proceedings may be extended for the duration of the proceedings plus one year. ³ If an accredited degree program is discontinued, the accreditation may be extended for students still enrolled at the time the accreditation period expires. ⁴If an accredited degree program is not

~~continued, the accreditation may be extended for students still enrolled at the expiration of the accreditation period.² 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 bundled or system accreditation in which the respective degree program is included.³ Upon submission of an application for a cluster or system accreditation, the accreditation of degree programs whose accreditation expires during the proceedings may be provisionally extended for the duration of the proceedings 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 request by the institution.

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

§ 28 Obligation to Report Changes

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

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

§ 29 Publication

¹ The Accreditation Council's decision and the accreditation report shall be published by the Accreditation Council on its website. ² Personal data may not be disclosed in the publication unless the data subject has consented or obtaining the data subject's consent is not possible or would require disproportionate effort, and it is evident that the disclosure is in the data subject's interest. ³~~Sentences 1 and 2 apply to internal accreditation decisions~~ system-accredited universities.

§ 30 Cluster Accreditation; Partial System Accreditation

(1) ¹ The report of the review panel pursuant to Section 24(4) may cover multiple degree programs if they share a high degree of academic affinity that goes beyond mere affiliation with a disciplinary field (humanities and cultural studies, social sciences, or natural sciences) (bundled accreditation). ² The academic and content-related criteria set forth in Part 3 must be assessed separately for each degree program. ³ A bundle shall consist of no more than ten degree programs.

(2) ¹ Bundles with more than four degree programs must be approved by the Accreditation Council prior to submission of the application. ² This applies to combined degree programs regardless of the size of the bundle. Upon request by the institution, the Accreditation Council may approve the specific composition of the bundle prior to submission of the application pursuant to § 23.

(3) ¹ In exceptional cases, a subunit of the institution responsible for organizing studies may be the subject of system accreditation. ² 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 quality management system of the subunit in which university and
3. at least one student from the subunit has already completed this program.

§ 31 Sampling

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

(2) ¹ The subject of the random sample is

1. the consideration of all criteria in accordance with Part 2 and Part 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.

² When selecting the sample, the review panel takes into account the university's range of disciplines in its teaching.

(3)¹ 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 apply 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.² The sample shall include one representative appointed by the authority responsible for the respective regulated profession, or one representative appointed by the authority responsible for the respective regulated profession, or a representative of the highest state authority responsible for the school system, or of the respective church authority.

Part 5 Procedural Rules for Special Degree Programs

§ 32 Combined degree programs

(1) If students select individual courses from a larger number of eligible courses for their program of study, each of these courses constitutes a component program within a combined degree program.

(2)¹ The subject of accreditation is the combined degree program.² Higher education institutions shall ensure, through their respective quality management systems, that the feasibility of study pursuant to § 12(5) is guaranteed for all possible subject combinations.

(3)¹ The accreditation of a combined degree program may be supplemented by the inclusion of additional elective sub-programs or subjects.² This does not alter the accreditation period for the combined degree program.

(4)¹ The accreditation certificate shall list all sub-programs or subjects included in the accreditation.² In the event of an addition to the accreditation pursuant to 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)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, notwithstanding § 22(1), be made by recognizing the evaluation conducted by an agency listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).² 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 Sections 10 and 16, Parts 2 and 3 of this Regulation has been demonstrated and the evaluation process has met the following requirements:

1. the Accreditation Council was notified of the conduct of the procedure prior to its commencement,
2. the accreditation decision is based on a self-report by the cooperating institutions of higher education, 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 degree program, with the participation of representatives from all cooperating institutions and other stakeholders,
4. the evaluation is based on a 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 states 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 Section 25(3), first sentence, and Sections 5 and 6 have been met,
6. the evaluation specifies the following characteristics: justification, finality, and, where applicable, demonstrated fulfillment of conditions, and
7. the Agency has published at least a summary of the report, including the evaluation and justification, on its website in

~~the Agency has published the report and the evaluation on its website in German and English.~~

³ Section 22, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, sentence 1, Section 26, paragraph 1, sentence 1, and paragraph 2, sentence 1,

Sections 28 and 29 apply mutatis mutandis. ⁴ If the accreditation decision is not made in accordance with the first sentence, notwithstanding Section 22, the provisions of Sections 10 and 16 for joint programs as defined in Section 10(1) shall nevertheless apply mutatis mutandis. ⁵⁴ Notwithstanding § 26(1), first sentence, and § 26(2), second sentence, the accreditation period shall be six years. ⁶⁵ Upon publication, the decision shall be identified as an accreditation decision based on the separate procedure for joint--degree programs. ⁷⁶ The institution of higher education must clearly indicate this in the degree documents.

(2) If a joint--degree program is coordinated and offered by a domestic institution of higher education together with one or more institutions of higher education from 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 domestic institution of higher education 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 Sections 10(1) and (2) and 16(1).

Part 6 Alternative Accreditation Procedures Pursuant to Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation

Section 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 implemented in accordance with Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation.

(2) ¹ Alternative procedures must comply with the criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3 of this Regulation. ² The provisions of the first sentence of Article 3(2) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation as well as the principles governing the appropriate involvement of the academic community set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in this Regulation shall apply mutatis mutandis; likewise, the requirements for participation and consent pursuant to Section 18(2) shall apply mutatis mutandis.

(3) ¹ The implementation of alternative procedures requires the prior approval of the Accreditation Council and the competent state science authority of the respective state; the Accreditation Council may commission an external review. ² The application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council via the competent state science authority. ³ In consultation with the state, the Accreditation Council may 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. ⁴ 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 regulate, in particular, the requirements for applications.

(5) ¹ The alternative procedure shall be limited to a maximum of eight years. ² Section 22(4), second sentence, and Section 26(3), ~~third sentence,~~ shall apply mutatis mutandis. ³ It shall be monitored by the Accreditation Council and, as a rule, evaluated by an independent, academic institution two years prior to the expiration of the project period.

Part 7 Miscellaneous

Section 35 Relationship to Procedures Concerning the Eligibility of a Degree Program Under Professional Licensing Law

(1) Accreditation procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(1) and Article 3(1)(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation may, 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 committees pursuant to § 25(1) and (2), to be appointed in addition to the other representatives or representatives of professional practice, shall be effected through nomination by the state authority responsible for the respective regulated profession.

§ 36 Evaluation

This Regulation shall be reviewed regularly and within a reasonable period of time. ~~(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.~~

Section 37 Entry into Force

Explanatory Memorandum to the Model Statutory Ordinance
pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 through 4, of the State Treaty on Study Program
Accreditation

Preliminary Remarks

On December 8, 2016, the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs reached an agreement on the draft of an inter-state treaty on the organization of a joint accreditation system for quality assurance in studies and teaching at German universities (Inter-State Treaty on Study Accreditation), which has ~~since~~ been signed by the heads of government of all federal states. With this State Treaty, the states have implemented the requirements of the Federal Constitutional Court, which, in its decision of February 17, 2016, defined the legal requirements for the accreditation system as a quality assurance instrument in the higher education sector. The State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation has ~~now~~ established the legal framework for accreditation as a binding, academically guided external procedure for quality assurance and development in teaching.

In addition to standardizing content-related as well as procedural and organizational requirements—which are to be established by the legislature itself—the Federal Constitutional Court also identified a need for formal regulation, particularly regarding the academically appropriate composition of the stakeholders and the procedures for establishing and revising the evaluation criteria. Resolutions by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Accreditation Council have been deemed insufficient as executive agreements.

Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation therefore contains an authorization for state regulations to specify the details regarding

- the formal criteria
- the subject-specific and content-related criteria
- the procedures and processes
- the composition of the committees.

On this basis, this model regulation sets forth the joint requirements of the states regarding the essential structural and qualitative standards for the accreditation of bachelor's and master's degree programs, which are necessary to ensure the states' obligation under Article 1(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation to to ensure the equivalence of corresponding academic and examination achievements as well as degrees and the possibility of transferring between higher education institutions.

~~The development of these~~ regulations ~~is based on~~ the relevant resolutions of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs regarding the bachelor's and master's degree system¹ and quality assurance through accreditation, in particular the joint state structural requirements, which

¹ In particular, the Joint State Structural Guidelines for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs (Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of October 10, 2003, as amended on February 4, 2010), see https://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2003/2003_10_10-Laendergemeinsame-Strukturvorgaben.pdf

existing rules for accreditation established by the Accreditation Council, proposals from its “Rule Revision” working group, as well as the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). However, the opportunity was also taken to further streamline and optimize the procedures based on previous experience with accreditation, thereby contributing to cost reduction and the reduction of bureaucracy. In addition, the results of consultations with representatives of the German Rectors’ Conference, the Accreditation Council, the agencies, the Association of Private Universities, students, and the school sector have been incorporated.

Regulations regarding the fees to be charged by the agencies, for which the State Treaty on Study Accreditation also provides an enabling basis (Article 4, Paragraph 5), are not the subject of this model regulation but remain—where necessary—reserved for separate regulations based on a further model regulation of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. It is planned to evaluate cost trends after two years in order to decide, on this basis, on the necessity of cost limits.

In drafting the model regulation, the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs was guided by the principle enshrined in the State Treaty on Study Accreditation that ensuring and developing the quality of study and teaching is primarily the responsibility of the universities. The Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs assumes that the universities will, on their own responsibility and across the board, prioritize the quality of study in the design of their degree programs.

The following explanatory notes are intended to provide guidance and interpretive guidance on the implementation of the state regulations to be enacted on the basis of the Model Regulation, in order to ensure uniformity of application within the framework of accreditation and to prevent divergent practices from jeopardizing the objectives of the State Treaty as set forth in Article 1, paragraph 2. In this context, the principle—which has been strongly advocated to date—continues to apply that existing discretionary leeway, as expressed in the Model Statute through a multitude of discretionary or mandatory provisions and restrictive wording, must be utilized flexibly and productively. However, the exercise of this discretion requires a comprehensible justification by the higher education institutions, which must be presented and verified within the framework of the accreditation of degree programs or in the corresponding internal quality assurance processes.

[The State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, which forms the basis of the Model Statute, entered into force on January 1, 2018. Section 36 of the Model Statute provided in the](#)

The version adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs on December 7, 2017, provided for a review of the implementation and effects of the regulation three years after its entry into force (January 1, 2018). The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs therefore initiated a comprehensive evaluation process of the Model Regulation in 2021. This process involved the federal states as well as, ~~once again,~~ relevant stakeholders in the accreditation system, such as the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, the German Trade Union Federation, the German Rectors' Conference, the churches, the Accreditation Council Foundation, and the Student Accreditation Pool, in cooperation with the "Free Association of Student Bodies," the Association of Private Universities, and the Association of Agencies. The results of this multi-stage participatory process have been incorporated into the present revised version of the Model Statute and its explanatory memorandum.

II. On the Individual Provisions Part

1 – General Provisions

§ 1 – Scope of Application

Paragraph 1 defines the subject matter of the Model Regulation, which, pursuant to Article 2, paragraphs 2 and 3, and Article 3, relates to the formal criteria, the academic and content-related criteria, and the procedure.

Paragraph 2 takes into account the resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs on the “Classification of Bachelor’s Degree Programs at Vocational Academies within the Consecutive Study Structure” dated October 15, 2004², which stipulates that degree programs at vocational academies leading to the “Bachelor’s” degree must be accredited. In this context, the regulations for program accreditation apply, unless specific provisions set forth in § 8(6) and § 21, which are based on the dual structure of the training, apply. The “Bachelor” degree awarded by vocational academies is not a higher education degree, but a state-recognized degree designation.

Accreditation in accordance with the provisions of the (Model) Statutory Ordinance forms the basis for the equivalence under higher education law of Bachelor’s degrees from vocational academies with Bachelor’s degrees from universities, which in particular opens access to Master’s degree programs and thereby increases the permeability of the education systems. It is expected that equivalence under higher education law will also be accompanied by equivalence under professional law.

§ 2 – Forms of Accreditation

Section 2 defines, in implementation of Article 3(1) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the possible subjects of accreditation to which the subsequent provisions of this statutory order apply.

Part 2 – Formal Criteria for Degree Programs

Part 2 primarily addresses the joint structural requirements agreed upon by the federal states, through which the states have agreed on the core elements of the tiered degree system as the basis for mobility during studies and mutual recognition of degrees within Germany and the European Higher Education Area.

Section 3 – Program Structure and Duration, Recognition, and Credit Transfer

Paragraph 1 establishes the principle that in a tiered degree system, the

²http://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2004/2004_10_15-Bachelor-Berufsakademie-Studienstruktur.pdf

bachelor's degree constitutes the standard degree. It must be characterized by an independent, professionally qualifying profile that enables the pursuit of professional activity in the respective field. This does not preclude the possibility that, for certain activities, the requirements prescribed by professional regulations are only met at the master's level.

The master's degree is defined as a further professional qualification at the university level.

Paragraph 2 provides a framework for the planning and design of bachelor's and master's degree programs at universities; it does not regulate individual study behavior.

The flexibility offered by 3-, 3.5-, and 4-year bachelor's programs and 1-, 1.5-, or 2-year master's programs on a full-time basis allows for a curriculum tailored to the requirements of the respective discipline and academic culture. Bachelor's programs with a standard duration of less than three years on a full-time basis are excluded. The total standard period of study to reach the master's level in consecutive degree programs is 10 semesters.

Exceptions are possible in the core artistic disciplines at art and music colleges. Subject to further provisions of state law, consecutive bachelor's and master's degree programs with a total duration of 6 years may also be established in these disciplines³. Furthermore, state law may also provide for the adjustment of standard periods of study subject to appropriate organizational arrangements.

Paragraph 3: The exemption for the "full theological program" is based on Article 17, Paragraph 2 of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation and takes into account the agreement between the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Evangelical Church in Germany, and the German Catholic Bishops' Conference titled "Key Points for the Study Structure in Programs in Catholic or Evangelical Theology/Religion" - Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of December 13, 2007

as amended on September 8, 2022⁴. In this agreement, the churches have agreed to follow the structural requirements pertaining to the degree program. However, different regulations may apply in specific cases regarding degree programs qualifying for church office. The division into Bachelor's and Master's degrees is therefore not

³ Note: The core artistic subjects are not defined in detail here. The decision regarding the inclusion of fine arts degree programs in the tiered degree structure and the classification of a subject as a core artistic subject is made by the respective state and university.

⁴
http://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2007/2007_12_13-Eckpunkte-Studienstruktur-Theologie.pdf

mandatory. However, the full-time theology programs with a standard period of study of ten semesters are otherwise fully subject to the formal and substantive criteria for accreditation, with the exception of the degree (see § 6, paragraph 2, sentence 6, and the explanatory memorandum).

Paragraph 4: In accordance with the provisions of state higher education laws, higher education institutions are required, in implementation of the Lisbon Convention, to recognize competencies, qualifications, and academic achievements acquired at higher education institutions, as well as to grant credit for competencies and qualifications acquired outside of higher education. Paragraph 4 clarifies that regulations regarding recognition and credit transfer are examined as formal criteria in accreditation procedures.

Section 4 – Program Profiles

Paragraph 1 establishes provisions regarding the profile of master’s degree programs. Regardless of the type of institution, master’s degree programs may be classified as either “application-oriented” or

“research-oriented.” Given the elimination of the distinction between programs at universities of applied sciences and traditional universities, this differentiation serves to enhance transparency for students and the labor market. Sentence 1 clarifies that defining an application- or research-oriented profile is optional. If one of these profile types is specified, it must be clearly reflected in the program’s structure. Master’s programs may also contain both practice-oriented and research-oriented elements; in such cases, they do not have a corresponding profile. If a profile type is specified, it must be clearly reflected in the program’s structure.

At art and music colleges, master’s programs may have a special artistic profile.

Master’s programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching career, on the other hand, must have a specific teaching-related profile. For this purpose, the joint state-level subject-specific requirements for teacher training (standards in educational sciences as well as joint state-level content requirements for the subjects and their didactics) and any state-specific content and structural requirements must be applied as assessment criteria.

Sentence 4 clarifies that the accreditation process must verify whether the institution has established a profile in accordance with Sentence 1 or Sentence 2. For degree programs covered by Sentence 3, the requirement remains that they must have a specific teacher-training profile, which is verified during the accreditation process. The respective profile must be verified during the accreditation process.

Paragraph 2: In the case of the master’s degree programs ,
regardless the type of institution

, a distinction is made between consecutive and continuing education master's programs, which are defined in more detail in § 11, paragraph 3.

Continuing education master's programs lead to the same level of qualification and the same entitlements as consecutive master's programs. Therefore, the same requirements regarding the standard period of study and the requirement for a thesis apply to them.

Paragraph 3 clarifies that the requirement for a thesis is an indispensable quality criterion for all degree programs. In artistic degree programs, the term "thesis" may also be understood to mean a "final project." The thesis serves as proof of the ability to independently address a problem within the respective discipline using scientific or artistic methods within a specified timeframe. For the scope of final theses, see § 8, Paragraph 3.

Section 5 – Admission Requirements and Transfers Between Degree Programs

Paragraph 1: Admission to a master's program requires a first professional degree⁵. This takes into account the nature of the master's degree as a further professional degree (see § 3, paragraph 1).

Under state law, an exception to the requirement of a first professional degree may be granted for professional and artistic master's programs if the first professional degree is replaced by an entrance examination. Sentence 3 stipulates, with regard to the profile of continuing education master's programs set forth in § 4(2), that admission requires qualified, i.e., professional practical experience relevant to the program's qualification objective, ~~generally of~~ no less than one year, since the design of a continuing education master's program takes into account and builds upon the students' professional experience. A duration of prior professional activity shorter than the minimum of one year is possible only in justified cases for individual students with an equivalent level of professional qualification, but not as a structural feature of the program's design (see also the explanatory memorandum to Section 11(3), sentences 3 and 4).

Paragraph 2, sentence 1, takes into account the interests of art and music colleges, which, when granting admission to master's programs, give priority to the particular artistic

⁵ Note: The Model Statute does not contain any specific provisions regarding the transition between degree programs under different degree systems to which the general credit transfer provisions apply. Universities and the federal states are free to regulate the details in their examination regulations or in provisions under higher education law.

Assess suitability. When admitting students to continuing education Master's programs in the arts—unlike for other continuing education Master's programs—state law may also take into account professional practical activities that are performed only during the course of study.

Paragraph 3: State law may provide for additional requirements for admission to master's degree programs.

§ 6 – Degrees and Degree Titles

Paragraph 1 establishes the principle that only one degree may be awarded for a successfully completed program. Exceptions are possible only within the framework of international collaborations leading to a double or multiple degree from the participating institutions. This precludes the simultaneous awarding of degrees from both the old and new degree systems. There is no differentiation of degrees based on the standard duration of study or the type of institution at which the degree was earned.

Paragraph 2 definitively establishes the degree titles for bachelor's and consecutive master's degree programs. Instead of the degree titles "Bachelor" and "Master," the Latin terms "Baccalaureus/Baccalaurea" and "Magister/Magistra" may also be used. For degree programs that cannot be clearly assigned to one of the subject groups listed in sentence 1, items 1 through 7, the degree title is determined by the program's academic focus. This applies to interdisciplinary and combined degree programs, but in particular also to polyvalent degree programs in the field of teacher education, for which degree titles under items 1 through 7 may be awarded. For continuing education master's programs, alternative designations remain possible. Subject-specific additions to degree titles and mixed-language degree titles are excluded, as are bachelor's degrees with the addition "honors."

Exceptions to the guidelines on degree titles apply to fully theological, non-tiered degree programs. These typically conclude with an academic degree. If the examination regulations provide for an academic degree, Section 3 of the "Guidelines" allows for the use of the degree title

"Magister Theologiae." This refers to the academic degree of "Master" in Latinized form and thus establishes a connection to the comprehensive Bologna Framework. It is left to the discretion of the theological faculties to also confer this academic degree in its feminine form.

Paragraph 2 Number 7 regulates the designations for Bachelor- and consecutive

Master's degrees for programs that provide the educational qualifications required for a teaching career. The degree title "Master of Education" (Section B 2 of the "Joint State Structural Guidelines for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs," resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of October 10, 2003, as amended

F.) should, in any case, in the interest of transparency and to avoid false expectations regarding mobility, be reserved for those degrees that—as a rule, nationwide—provide access to a preparatory service for a teaching career in accordance with state law.

Paragraph 3 provides for the issuance of certificates of equivalence and thus serves to establish transparency regarding the qualification level of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in comparison to the Diplom degree in the single-tier system. Certificates of equivalence are already standard practice at some universities.

Paragraph 4 stipulates that the Diploma Supplement is a mandatory component of every degree certificate. The Diploma Supplement is an additional document containing standardized information describing higher education degrees and associated qualifications, intended to facilitate and improve the evaluation and classification of these degrees for both academic and professional purposes. The version of the Diploma Supplement agreed upon by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the German Rectors' Conference, in its currently valid form, must be used.

§ 7 – Modularization

Paragraph 1 defines the requirements for modularization that must be demonstrated as part of the accreditation process. Modules consist of self-contained units of study, both thematically and in terms of time, that are assigned credit points. They may be composed of various forms of teaching and learning (e.g., lectures, seminars, internships, e-learning, teaching research, etc.). A module may cover the intended learning outcomes and course content of a single semester or academic year, but in exceptional cases may also extend over several semesters. Taking learning outcomes into account beyond the scope of course content serves to focus on students and competencies. The basic time limit of two consecutive semesters serves two primary purposes. On the one hand, modules serve to provide a transparent internal structure for degree programs and should therefore not be too large. On the other hand, modules that extend over a longer period of time could restrict mobility. If the institution deviates from this time limit, it must demonstrate that this has no adverse effect on the intended objectives or that such effects are offset by appropriate measures. Sentence 3 takes into account the specific characteristics of artistic degree programs.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 set forth the requirements for module descriptions. The module description should provide students with reliable information regarding the course structure, content, qualitative and quantitative requirements, integration into the overall structure of the degree program, ~~and the relationship to other modules offered~~. The description should also enable an assessment of the module with regard to its transferability or recognition when changing universities. On a voluntary basis, module descriptions may also include information on the applicability of the module in other degree programs or in conjunction with modules within the same degree program.

Paragraph 2 does not contain any rigid stipulations that would prevent flexible design of the course offerings. Notwithstanding the universities' responsibility for the specific design of the modules, the standards recommended in items 1 through ~~89~~ for the description of modules assume, however, that information on the following aspects is provided:

1. intended learning outcomes and course content

- a) subject-specific, methodological, practical and
- interdisciplinary course content,
- b) subject-specific, methodological, interdisciplinary competencies,
key competencies,
- c) ~~intended learning outcomes and qualification goals~~ aligned with a yet-to-be-defined overall qualification (intended degree);

2. Teaching and learning formats

Description of the individual teaching and learning methods (lectures, exercises, seminars, internships, project work, self-study);

3. Requirements for Participation (in conjunction with paragraph 3)

Description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful participation, as well as options for preparing for participation (including bibliographic references and information on multimedia-supported teaching and learning programs);

4. ~~Applicability of the module (in conjunction with paragraph 3)~~

~~Description of how the module relates to other modules within the same degree program and to what extent it is suitable for use in other degree programs;~~

45. Requirements for the awarding of credit points from ECTS-

credits (in conjunction with paragraph 3)

Description of the requirements for the awarding of credit points—in particular examinations (type of examination, e.g., oral or written examination, presentation, term paper, as well as the scope and duration of the examination), proof of attendance, and opportunities for compensation—shall be regulated in the examination regulations;

65. Credits and Grades~~ECTS Credits and Grading~~

Separate reporting of credit points and grades; in addition to the grade based on the German grading scale from 1 to 5, a relative grade must also be reported for the final grade. It is recommended that this be calculated in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide in its currently valid version;

76. Frequency of ~~module~~ offerings

Specify whether the module is offered every semester, every academic year, or only at longer intervals;

87. Workload

Specification of the total workload and the number of credit points to be earned for each module;

98. Duration of the ~~modules~~

Determination of the duration of the modules due to their impact on the course of study, the examination load, and the frequency of offerings.

§ 8 – Credit Point System

Paragraph 1 addresses the awarding of credit points. These serve as a quantitative measure of the student's overall workload and encompass both direct instruction and the time required for preparation and follow-up work on the course material (classroom and self-study), the effort involved in examinations and exam preparation, including final theses and term papers, as well as internships where applicable.

The awarding of credit points is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which is applied within the European Higher Education Area as part of the Bologna Process and thus facilitates mutual recognition.

Sixty credit points are awarded per academic year, i.e., 30 per semester. For one credit, a student's workload in classroom and self-study is assumed to be 25 to a maximum of 30 hours, so that the total workload for a full-time student per semester, including both the lecture and non-lecture periods, amounts to 750 to 900 hours. This corresponds to 32 to 39

hours per week over 46 weeks per year. The specific determination of how many working hours within this range correspond to one ECTS credit is set forth in the study and examination regulations.

Credit points are assigned to individual modules. They are awarded once the requirements specified in the examination regulations have been met; this does not necessarily require an examination, but rather the successful completion of the respective module.

Paragraph 2 stipulates that a minimum of 180 ECTS credits is required to earn a bachelor's degree, and a total of 300 ECTS credits is required to reach the master's level—that is, including prior studies up to the first professionally qualifying degree. No exceptions to these planning requirements for universities are provided for. The deviations from the standard period of study permitted under § 3 relate exclusively to the time requirements and do not allow for any deviation from the ECTS credit requirements.

According to sentence ~~34~~, deviations from the 300 ECTS credit requirement for the Master's degree may be permitted in individual cases if the student possesses the appropriate qualifications. However, this exception applies exclusively to the individual student and not to the degree program. Accordingly, applicants may also be admitted to master's programs who, based on the total number of ECTS credits from their bachelor's studies, do not

300 ECTS credits. The prerequisite is proof of the qualifications required for admission.

In accordance with the maximum standard period of study of 6 years (Section 3, Paragraph 2), the master's level may be attained with 360 credit points in consecutive bachelor's and master's programs in the core artistic disciplines at universities of the arts and music conservatories. The option of large modules in the core artistic subject during the bachelor's program ([Section 7, Paragraph 1, Sentence 3](#)) takes into account the unique characteristics of artistic education, which, due to its holistic approach, precludes a highly granular modularization.

Paragraph 3 regulates the scope of the final theses. To ensure a scope of work that is aligned with the educational objectives and level and is proportionate to the course load of the respective program, the scope of the Bachelor's thesis may not be less than 6 ECTS credits nor exceed 12 ECTS credits. For the master's thesis, a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 30 ECTS credits apply. These requirements serve both quality assurance and the students' interest in degree programs that are not overburdened in terms of content or time. The ranges allow for

for flexible structuring while taking subject-specific characteristics into account.

In principle, these guidelines also apply to art and music colleges. In justified exceptional cases, the scope of the Bachelor's thesis in fine arts programs may be up to 20 ECTS credits and that of the Master's thesis up to 40 ECTS credits.

Paragraph 4 stipulates that deviations from the guidelines regarding the credit volume per semester are generally permissible for certain types of study programs, such as intensive programs. The upper limit is 75 ECTS credits, based on 30 hours per credit. In these cases, special attention must be paid to the feasibility of the program. Through measures related to the organization of studies, universities can help ensure the feasibility of such programs.

Paragraph 5 incorporates the recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the German Rectors' Conference regarding the awarding of a master's degree in teacher education when achievements from the pre-service training period are to be included, dated June 12, 2007, and July 8, 2008⁶. One option for incorporating the preparatory service into the master's program is the recognition of portions of the preparatory service. The benchmark for practical school training during the degree program and the preparatory service is the "Standards for Teacher Education: Educational Sciences" (Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated December 16, 2004)⁷. On this basis, universities and institutions of the second phase of training agree on state-specific qualification frameworks, on the basis of which universities and institutions of the second phase of training jointly and by mutual agreement develop training formats and examination procedures amounting to up to 60 ECTS credits for a one-year training period as the basis for credit transfer to the university program.

Paragraph 6 regulates specific features of the study structure for vocational academies. Vocational academies are institutions in the tertiary sector that provide at least three years of academically oriented and simultaneously practice-oriented education. The number of ECTS credits to be earned and the ratio of theory- and practice-based components of the program are based on the aforementioned resolution of the

6

https://www.kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/Beschluesse_Veroeffentlichungen/Kultusministerkonferenz-Hochschulrektorenkonferenz-Empfehlung_12-06-08_08-07-08.pdf

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Files/Publications_Resolutions/2008/2008_06_12-Recommendation-Master-Teacher-Preparation.pdf

⁷ Standards for Teacher Education: Educational Sciences (Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated 12/16/2004, as amended on ~~05/16/2019~~) available at

http://www.kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2004/2004_12_16-Standards-Lehrerbildung-Bildungswissenschaften.pdf

Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of October 15, 2004⁸.

Comparability with university bachelor's degree programs—a prerequisite for equivalence under higher education law—requires that the theory-based components of the training be in an appropriate balance with the practice-based components. The classification as “theory-based” and “practice-based” is not to be determined based on the institution but rather on the learning content, so that theory-based ECTS credits can also be earned during the training phases in the workplace, provided the relevant requirements—which also apply to the teaching staff (see § 21)—are met. The establishment of a range of 120 to 150 ECTS credits for the theory-based components allows for a flexible structure that meets the requirements of the respective degree programs.

§ 9 – Special Criteria for Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Partners

Section 9 sets forth the specific formal criteria for non-university collaborations in accordance with

Section 19. Paragraph 1, sentence 1, establishes—from the perspective of quality assurance and transparency—the requirement for a written cooperation agreement between the degree-granting institution and the cooperating educational provider regarding the nature, scope, and mutual obligations of the existing cooperation. Furthermore, for reasons of consumer protection, the scope and nature of the cooperation must be clearly presented on the institution's website.

Paragraph 1, sentence 2, emphasizes that universities, as guarantors of the quality of the degrees and academic titles they confer, are responsible for the quality assurance of study programs as well as the credit transfer procedures for competencies acquired outside of higher education. Only those competencies that are equivalent in content and level to the part of the program of study they are intended to replace may be credited. In this context, such knowledge and skills acquired outside the higher education system may replace no more than 50% of a higher education program. This ensures that a substantial part of the education underlying the higher education degree takes place under the direct responsibility of the awarding institution, i.e., through its own efforts.

Paragraph 2 makes it clear that program-related collaborations with non-higher-education institutions can only be considered qualitatively equivalent if they generate verifiable additional academic and educational benefits for future students and for the degree-granting institution. This added value must be clearly demonstrated.

⁸ See footnote 2

Section 10 – Special Provisions for Joint Degree Programs with the University of -

These regulations are intended to implement the so-called European Approach to Quality Assurance in Joint xml-ph-0000@deep.ln-Degree Programs, adopted at the Conference of Ministers of Education and

of the European Higher Education Area⁹ in May 2015 in Yerevan, known as the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint_ Programs (EA)¹⁰ . This is intended to enable the external quality assurance of degree programs—particularly those jointly developed and administered by higher education institutions in different countries within the European Higher Education Area—based on uniform procedural rules and criteria aligned^{with} the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)¹¹, which also underpin the European Higher Education Area. Corresponding provisions regarding the subject-specific and content-related criteria and the procedural rules are set forth in Parts 3 and 4 of this Regulation (Sections 16 and 33). The provisions contained in Parts 2, 3, and 4 of this Regulation apply to joint degree programs only to the extent expressly specified.

The regulations governing joint ~~degree programs~~ establish the legal framework for programs that deviate from criteria and procedural rules . They thus provide, beyond the right of the Accreditation Council Foundation to establish the requirements for the recognition of accreditation decisions by foreign institutions as set forth in Article 5(3)(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the possibility of making accreditation decisions that deviate from the criteria and procedural rules defined in this ordinance. Article 5(3), second sentence, of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation merely mandates the Accreditation Council Foundation to regulate the requirements for conducting corresponding recognition procedures based on the criteria and procedural rules set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and in the regulations issued pursuant to Article 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, without permitting any deviation from these requirements. Authorizing the Foundation to independently define criteria and procedural rules in such proceedings that deviate from these requirements is not consistent with the objectives set forth in Article 1, paragraphs 2 and 3, Article 4(6) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation, but also in light of constitutional principles (in particular the principle of specificity and the theory of materiality).

⁹ <https://www.ehea.info/> , currently 48 European countries

¹⁰ http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/02_European%20Approach%20QA%20of%20Joint%20Programmes_v1_0.pdf
https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/02_European_Approach_QA_of_Joint_Programmes_v1_0.pdf¹¹ <http://www.ehea.info/cid105593/esg.html>

Paragraph 1 defines the scope of application. ~~In the interest of fully implementing the European Approach, this scope is limited in light of divergent criteria associated with the application of the EA—in particular, a Master’s degree, including the first degree, does not structurally require 300 ECTS credits—and pending clarification of other scope-related issues, is initially limited to degree programs leading to a joint degree (Joint Degree Programs), including double and multiple degrees. Accordingly, a joint degree program is a program offered by a domestic higher education institution in collaboration with one or more foreign higher education institutions and leading to a degree awarded jointly by these institutions.~~

The participating institutions must be recognized as higher education institutions by the competent authorities in their respective countries. Their respective national legal frameworks must permit them to participate in joint ~~degree programs and to award a joint degree~~ (see B 1.1 EA).

Paragraphs 1 through 5 set forth the requirements for the structure of the study program and the cooperation that are essential for the scope of application; compliance with these requirements is verified during the accreditation process. For degree programs that meet the requirements under Section 10(1), first sentence, Sections 10, 16, and 33 may be applied. In addition, higher education institutions may continue to offer degree programs with dual and multiple degrees based on mutual recognition of academic achievements with a lower degree of integration that do not meet the criteria of paragraph 1. In such cases, §§ 10, 16, and 33 do not apply; instead, § 20 applies.

Number 1 stipulates that the degree program must be based on a jointly coordinated and systematically interrelated coherent curriculum. This excludes application to models in which higher education institutions cooperate only in the recognition of competencies but do not maintain a joint curriculum (see Introduction to the EA).

Paragraph 2 stipulates that each student must complete at least 25% of the program (measured in ECTS credits) at at least one of the foreign partner institutions. This excludes the application of the special provisions for joint ~~degree programs~~ in cases of cooperation involving optional study abroad or in cases where only foreign students are required to be mobile.

Paragraph 3 stipulates the requirement for a contractually regulated collaboration between the participating universities, in order to particularly in the interest of the

To ensure the sustainability of the study program for students. The cooperation agreement concluded by the participating institutions within the framework of their contractually regulated collaboration must, in particular, include provisions regarding: the designation of the degree(s) awarded in the program; coordination and responsibilities of the partners with regard to management and financial organization; admission and selection procedures for students; mobility of students and faculty; examination regulations and methods for assessing students; recognition of credit points and procedures for awarding degrees; and the involvement of all cooperating institutions in the design and implementation of the program (see B 1.3 EA).

Paragraph 4 ensures, in the interest of the students, that the study program has a coordinated admissions and examination system (see B 1.3 EA).

Number 5 stipulates that the participating institutions must have a common quality management system. This includes the participating institutions applying common internal quality assurance processes. These encompass, in particular, the quality assurance strategy, standards for the design and approval of degree programs, adherence to the principles of student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment, transparent regulations regarding admission and the course of study, recognition, and degree conferral; ensuring the competence of faculty; providing adequate resources to ensure the learning environment; sound information management; and ongoing monitoring and regular review of degree programs (see B 9 EA in conjunction with ESG 1.1 and Part 1 of the ESG).

Paragraph 2 establishes the formal criteria applicable to joint- degree programs.

Sentence 1, with regard to the participation of foreign higher education institutions and the political agreements reached within the European Higher Education Area, expressly stipulates as an assessment criterion the application of the recognition principles of the so-called Lisbon Convention¹² (see B 4.2 EA), which already apply to higher education institutions based in Germany under federal or state law. These include:

- a right to recognition of competencies acquired as qualifications for or within the context of higher education studies, provided that there are no significant differences between the competencies acquired and those to be demonstrated. This applies in particular to the

Act No. 12 on the Convention of April 11, 1997, on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in the European Region of May 16 May 2007, Federal Law Gazette 2007 II p. 712 f. <http://www2.fzs.de/uploads/lissabonkonvention.pdf>
https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/ZAB/Konventionen_und_Uebereinkommen_von_Europarat_UNESCO/Lissabonkonvention.pdf

to measure the qualification objective of the respective degree program,

- a reversal of the burden of proof in favor of the applicants,
- an obligation on the part of the university to provide reasons for negative decisions,
- the right to a review of the decision.

Sentence 2 clarifies that the principles regarding modularization and the credit point system set forth in Sections 7 and 8(1) also apply here and that the distribution of credit points must be clearly regulated (see B 3.2 EA).

Sentence 3 stipulates, in accordance with the political agreements within the European Higher Education Area, that a bachelor's degree program must comprise a minimum of 180 and a maximum of 240 credit points, and a master's degree program a minimum of 60 credit points (see B 3.3 EA). However, a Master's degree, including the first degree, does not necessarily have to be based on 300 ECTS credits.

Sentence 4 clarifies, particularly in the interest of internationally mobile students, that relevant information about the program—such as admission requirements and procedures, the course catalog, and examination and assessment procedures—must be published and accessible to students at all times. (See B 8 EA).

Sentence 5 clarifies that for degree programs that meet the requirements of § 10(1), sentence 1, only the formal criteria for degree programs (Part 2 of the Regulation) explicitly listed in paragraph 2 apply. The remaining formal criteria for degree programs pursuant to Part 2 of the Regulation need not be met.

Paragraph 3 expands the scope of application of the provisions in §§ 10(1) and (2), 16(~~The~~ criteria and procedural rules of ~~the so-called European Approach~~, as set forth in § 1 and § 33(1), apply to joint degree programs in the field of—that are conducted in cooperation with higher education institutions outside the European Higher Education Area, provided that the non-European cooperation partners have committed to applying these principles in a cooperation agreement with the domestic higher education institution.

Part 3: Academic and Content-Related Criteria for Degree Programs and Quality Management Systems

This section serves to specify the academic and content-related criteria referred to in Article 2, Paragraph 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

§ 11 – Qualification Objectives and Degree Level

Section 11 specifies the criteria according to which, within the framework of the accreditation process,

the consistency of the qualification objectives and the degree level of the respective program concept is to be assessed.

Paragraph 1 refers to Article 2, Paragraph 3, Number 1 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, which lists as the qualification objectives of a study program the scientific or artistic competence corresponding to the intended degree level, as well as the ability to engage in qualified gainful employment and personal development. In view of the particular importance of the social relevance of study and teaching as part of the characteristic of personal development, this is explicitly mentioned in accordance with the definition provided by the Science Council in its 2015 recommendations on the relationship between higher education and the labor market¹³. As part of the accreditation process, it must be verified whether the qualification objectives and intended learning outcomes to be specifically defined by the institution for each degree program reflect these goals. The qualification objectives and learning outcomes of a degree program provide a clear, concise overview of the program. They are just as important for prospective students when choosing a program as they are for employers when evaluating the qualifications of graduates. The institution must therefore make them publicly available (e.g., on its website).

Paragraph 2: The aspects of the academic, scientific, artistic, methodological, and personal development requirements described in paragraph 2 are based on the descriptors and competency dimensions of the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees in its current version¹⁴, which was developed in cooperation between the German Rectors' Conference and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs on February 16, 2017. This framework implements the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area¹⁵ and encompasses the imparting of up-to-date subject-specific knowledge, interdisciplinary knowledge, and the generally accepted principles of good scientific practice, as well as the acquisition of methodological, personal, and social competencies and the assurance of employability and the ability to engage in lifelong learning. During the accreditation process, it must be verified whether the program concept encompasses these aspects and whether they correspond to the level of the degree awarded.

¹³ <https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/4925-15.pdf>, p. 40f

¹⁴ https://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2017/2017_02_16-QualificationFramework.pdf

¹⁵ http://media.ehea.info/file/WG_Frameworks_qualification/85/2/Framework_qualificationsforEHEA-May2005_587852.pdf

https://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/WG_Frameworks_qualification/85/2/Framework_qualificationsforEHEA-May2005_587852.pdf

Paragraph 3 establishes, based on relevant resolutions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs¹⁶ that have proven effective in previous accreditation practice, the requirements to be assessed in the accreditation process for the bachelor's and master's levels within the tiered system and for different program profiles.

Sentence 1 clarifies the function of the bachelor's degree as the first professionally qualifying degree; as an undergraduate degree, it must provide a broad-based education and thus ensure both the ability to engage in professional work and the capacity for further academic or artistic development and lifelong learning. In accordance with the differentiation of master's degree programs pursuant to Section 4(2), sentence 2 defines consecutive master's degree programs as programs that deepen, broaden, or are interdisciplinary or in a different field. Sentences 3 and 4 regulate the specific requirements for professional master's degree programs. Continuing education master's programs are characterized by their focus on professional qualification. Therefore, prior professional experience is a constitutive element, which must be reflected in both the duration and the nature of the work. Any duration of prior professional experience shorter than the minimum of one year therefore requires special justification. The professional experience builds upon the prior first professional qualification and therefore cannot be replaced either by mandatory internships from the bachelor's phase or by professional experience prior to the start of the bachelor's program. In accordance with the educational objective, special attention must be paid during the accreditation process to the connection between professional qualification and the program concept, as demonstrated by the institution. The same applies to the review of the requirements, which—despite the predominantly professional orientation—must correspond both structurally (see also § 4, paragraph 2) and in terms of content to the qualification level defined for the master's level (see also paragraph 2). Sentence 5 specifies the qualification objectives for artistic bachelor's and master's degree programs.

Bachelor's and Master's degree programs may be pursued at various institutions of higher education, including different types of institutions, and may also include periods of professional activity between the first and second degrees.

Section 12 – Coherent Program Concept and Adequate Implementation

Section 12 specifies the criteria for evaluating the respective program concept based on the structural requirements set forth in Section 3 et seq., and defines the framework conditions to be examined for adequate implementation. In doing so, particular emphasis is placed on the feasibility of completing the program within the standard period of study. The

¹⁶ see footnote 1

regulations are based on the standards adopted by the participating states of the European Higher Education Area at their ministerial conference in May 2015 regarding internal quality assurance at higher education institutions, particularly concerning the design of degree programs (Standard 1.2), student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment (Standard 1.3), admission, course of study, recognition, and degree completion (Standard 1.4), faculty (Standard 1.5), and requirements for the learning environment (Standard 1.6).

Paragraph 1, sentence 1 requires a curriculum that is coherent with regard to the attainability of the qualification objectives, taking into account the entry qualifications (see Standard 1.2). Sentence 2 requires a correlation between qualification objectives (see also § 11, paragraphs 1 and 2), the program title, the degree level, and the degree designation (see also

§ 6) and module concept (see also § 7). Sentence 3 calls for diverse teaching, learning, and assessment methods adapted to the respective disciplinary cultures_ and the chosen program format, as well as practical components where appropriate (see Standard 1.3). When evaluating the respective program concept, “examination formats” are also taken into account to ensure compliance with the principle of designing examinations based on the intended learning outcomes and, consequently, the design of the course (constructive alignment). Sentence 4 stipulates that the program must provide suitable framework conditions to promote student mobility, enabling students to spend time at other universities without losing academic credit. This includes, in particular, the consideration of mobility windows in the program design and recognition procedures that consistently apply the principles of the Lisbon Convention¹⁷ not only during stays at universities abroad but also within the country. Admission requirements for master’s programs must also be designed to promote mobility and enable transfers between institutions and types of higher education institutions. Sentence 5 ensures that students are encouraged to actively participate in shaping the teaching and learning process. This ensures student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment as defined in ESG Standard 1.3. Sentence 6 addresses the publication requirement formulated in 1.4 of the ESG. The ESG standard includes the requirement to publish regulations covering all phases of the “student life cycle.”

Paragraphs 2 and 3: In addition to program-specific aspects, the institutional framework must also be included in the evaluation to the extent that it has direct relevance to the implementation of the program. This encompasses both the teaching staff and the allocation of resources (see Standard 1.5 Teaching Staff and 1.6 Learning Environment). The wording allows for an approach tailored to the specific program

¹⁷ see footnote 12

Paragraph 2, sentence 1, stipulates that the teaching staff must ensure, both in terms of quantity and quality, that the curriculum is implemented adequately. This also includes the teaching competence of the faculty. Sentence 2 requires that the integration of research and teaching be ensured by a sufficient number of full-time professors¹⁸ who are regularly engaged in teaching. This applies to both undergraduate and graduate programs. Sentence 3 requires appropriate measures for staff selection and qualification as the basis for teaching that is substantively and didactically sound in the respective program. These include, for example, structured processes for appointment procedures or a systematic offering of university-level teaching qualifications.

Paragraph 3 stipulates that resource allocation must also be included in the evaluation to the extent that it is significant for the implementation of the program design and the achievement of educational goals. The text in parentheses contains an illustrative list of possible resource characteristics, which, however, is not exhaustive and may be replaced or supplemented by others on a case-by-case basis.

Paragraph 4: The planned examinations and forms of assessment must enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The examinations must be module-based—rather than course-based—and designed to assess competencies. To ensure this, the forms of assessment used must be subject to ongoing review and refinement.

Paragraph 5 ensures that the degree program is structured in such a way that a student can typically complete it successfully within the standard period of study and, for this purpose, lists in sentence 2 the components that must be assessed during the evaluation. This list is not exhaustive. Depending on the specific program concept (e.g., for programs with a special profile, see paragraph 6), additional factors may need to be considered here.

According to paragraph 1, one criterion for the feasibility of a degree program is predictable and reliable academic operations. This includes, in particular, providing students with timely and comprehensive information on all organizational aspects of the program, as well as the transparent and reliable planning and conduct of courses and examinations.

¹⁸ Due to differing definitions of the term “professor” under state law, different terms may be used in the regulations of the individual states.

Furthermore, according to paragraph 2, it is required that courses and exams largely avoid overlapping. This applies above all to the compulsory module area and to frequently chosen subject combinations and elective modules. To the extent that avoiding overlap cannot otherwise be guaranteed, timely and transparent information must be provided to prospective students and current students.

Furthermore, pursuant to paragraph 3, the program concept must plausibly define the workload and examination burden in accordance with the formal requirements in Sections 7 and 8, and these definitions must be continuously reviewed—in particular through regular workload surveys—and adjusted as necessary. To ensure that students can actively shape the course of their studies, sufficient flexibility—particularly with regard to changing universities—and predictability for students, the learning outcomes of a module must be designed such that they can generally be achieved within one semester, but no later than within one year.

~~Furthermore, according to Section 4, an adequate examination frequency and organization are indispensable. With and , among others, an adequate and workload-appropriate examination frequency and~~

~~- The organizational structure described in paragraph 4 ensures that the degree program is designed in such a way that it can be successfully completed within the standard period of study. In accordance with the didactic concept and in line with the principle of competency-based assessment enshrined in § 12(4), multiple (smaller) exams per module are also possible, provided that this ensures an adequate and workload-appropriate frequency and organization of exams. This must be coherently justified and evaluated with the involvement of students as part of the continuous monitoring within the meaning of § 14. This requires an examination concept demonstrating that the overall examination workload, relative to the respective degree program, is appropriate. In this context, an examination refers to legally sound proof that the qualification objective of the module has been achieved. This also includes prerequisite coursework, academic achievements, or other forms of evidence, such as the completion of an internship, conducting a laboratory experiment, or participating in field trips. If universities systematically schedule only one examination per module, resulting in a maximum of six examinations per semester, a description of the examination concept within the module descriptions or examination regulations is sufficient. If degree programs systematically schedule more than one examination per module, the typical examination configurations must be outlined at the degree program level as part of the program design. In addition to didactics and competency-based learning, the concept must make it clear to reviewers that the overall exam workload is reasonable, does not increase with the number of exams, and ensures a sensible distribution of the exam load throughout the semester. The concept can be based on~~

This should be outlined in the relevant section of the self-evaluation report or in corresponding documents from system-accredited institutions of higher education. Therefore, modules designed to reduce the examination workload should generally be completed with only one examination and should typically be worth at least five ECTS credits. Thus, with 30 ECTS credits per semester in a full-time program, no more than six examinations per semester should be expected. The explicit involvement of students in the assessment of examination density and organization is intended, among other things, to prevent overly fragmented examination systems and the associated high examination workload. In this context, an examination refers to legally valid proof that the qualification objective of the module has been achieved. This also includes prerequisite coursework, academic achievements, or other forms of evidence, such as the completion of an internship, the conduct of a laboratory experiment, or participation in field trips. In addition, modules should generally be worth at least five ECTS credits.

~~These are target requirements~~; that is, deviations are possible in justified exceptional cases. In doing so, the consistency of the respective module concepts and the consistency of the examination concept in relation to the qualification objectives of the respective module must be taken into account, as must the overall examination workload in the respective degree program¹⁹ .

Paragraph 6: The program profile as defined by the institution must be included in the evaluation. If the institution advertises or characterizes a program with specific features (e.g., international, dual, part-time while working, virtual, work-integrated, part-time), these features are part of the program profile and are therefore also subject to evaluation.

In such cases, the criteria listed in paragraphs 1 through 5 must be applied in accordance with the specific profile from the respective specific perspective and measured against the special requirements to be defined by the institutions in each case. These include, in particular, aspects such as the specific target group, a special program structure, different learning locations, and the involvement of industry partners—for example, in dual models—specific teaching and learning formats, or the existence of a sustainable quality management system that encompasses the various learning locations.

Paragraph 7 establishes the three-way integration of learning environments in dual study programs—at the content, organizational, and contractual levels—as a defining feature of dual study programs. This definition serves to clarify the relevant requirements both for the design of study programs by the institution of higher education and for the accreditation of dual

¹⁹ Joint State Structural Guidelines for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs of February 4, 2010 – Interpretation Notes – of February 25, 2011, Number 5

~~programs. It also creates transparency for prospective students as well as future employers of graduates of dual study programs. A program may be designated and advertised as “dual” if the learning locations (at least the university/vocational academy and the company) are systematically interlinked in terms of content, organization, and contract²⁰~~

Section 13 – Academic and Content-Related Design of Degree Programs

Section 13 defines the framework conditions for the academic and content-related evaluation of degree programs and specifies the special requirements for teacher education programs.

Paragraph 1: In light of Article 5, Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law, the provision is limited to verifying compliance with procedural requirements designed to ensure a substantively sound program concept, and grants the reviewers broad discretion regarding the content. According to the first sentence, this includes the existence of mechanisms or measures to determine the consistency of the academic and scientific requirements. According to the second sentence, it is also necessary to demonstrate regular monitoring and adjustment not only of the subject-specific and content-related design of the curriculum, but also of the methodological and didactic approaches, in order to ensure that the breadth and diversity of current scientific theories in the respective subject are conveyed. According to the third sentence, this can only be ensured if the academic discourse at the national and, where applicable, international level is systematically taken into account. This includes critical reflection on different subject-specific reference systems as well as continuous engagement with the latest state of research.

The use of modules from bachelor’s programs in master’s programs is permitted only in exceptional cases, provided that the partial qualification objective achieved upon successful completion of the respective module adequately contributes to the achievement of the overall qualification objective of the master’s program. This applies to both consecutive and continuing education master’s programs. However, the double use of modules in sub-areas of the program that build upon one another in terms of content must be excluded. Furthermore, it must be excluded that modules with essentially identical content can be taken in the bachelor’s program and again in the master’s program.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 define the subject-specific and content-related criteria for the review of degree programs that provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching career. With a view to the requirement of ensuring high-quality school instruction and, thereby, the guarantee of comparable educational opportunities (state

²⁰ Due to differing definitions of the term “dual study program” under state law, the regulations of the states may provide for deviating, supplementary, or more specific definitions.

(responsibility for the school system), uniform guidelines are required here. The regulations are based on the standards adopted for this purpose by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs.²¹

Paragraph 2 governs the requirement to verify that the curriculum complies with the joint state standards in the subject sciences and subject didactics as well as in educational sciences. These arise from the joint state and, where applicable, state-specific content requirements based on the KMK resolutions in their currently applicable versions.²²

Paragraph 3 specifies the structural and conceptual criteria to be reviewed during the accreditation process, thereby adopting the provisions set forth in the relevant KMK resolution. The exceptions permitted therein for the respective teaching profession in the subjects of art and music must be taken into account. Sentence 2 clarifies that exceptions to Sentence 1, items 1 and 2, are also permissible for teacher training programs for vocational schools in accordance with the applicable resolutions of the Conference of Ministers of Education (Framework Agreement for Teacher Training 5) as well as within the framework of measures to recruit teachers in situations of special need²³ from Sentence 1, items 1 and 2. The latter applies in particular to master's programs for career changers in one or two subjects, the "additionality" of which must be documented separately in the context of the accreditation process. In this context, "additionality" means that master's programs for career changers represent an additional academic offering that the respective institution may establish alongside its undergraduate programs in the corresponding teaching professions and subjects.

§ 14 – Academic Success

To ensure efficient program design and thus academic success, it is in the interest of students and graduates, but also in the

²¹ In particular: Key points for the mutual recognition of bachelor's and master's degrees in degree programs that provide the educational qualifications required for a teaching career, resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated June 2, 2005, available at

http://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2005/2005_06_02-gegenseitige-Anerkennung-Bachelor-Master.pdf

²² See [footnote 7](#) regarding educational sciences; see regarding subject-specific sciences and didactics: Joint State Requirements for the Content of Subject-Specific Sciences and Didactics in Teacher Education (Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated October 16, 2008, as amended on ~~February 3, 2024~~) at https://www.Kultusministerkonferenz.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2008/2008_10_16-Subject-Profiles-Teacher-Education.pdf Framework

Agreements for Individual Teaching Qualifications

²³ Measures to recruit additional teachers and to structurally supplement teacher training, Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of March 14, 2024, available at https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Files/publications_resolutions/2024/2024_03_14-Recruiting-Additional-Teachers.pdf; Designing Additional Pathways to the Teaching Profession, Resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated June 13, 2024, available at https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_06_13-Zusaetzliche-Wege-ins-Lehramt.pdf

In the interest of the sustainable use of resources and time, continuous monitoring and adjustment of study programs, incorporating the experiences of students and graduates, is indispensable. Section 14 specifies the criteria to be reviewed for this purpose. These include a closed-loop system with regular review (sentence 1), the implementation of measures based on the results of the review (sentence 2), and continuous assessment of success as well as the use of the results for further development (sentence 3). Suitable monitoring measures include, in particular, course evaluations, workload surveys, or graduate surveys, as well as statistical analyses of the course of study and examinations and student/graduate statistics. The measures to be implemented may be of a diverse nature and may, in particular, concern the aspects mentioned in Sections 11 and 12. To ensure efficient and sustainable implementation, clause 4 stipulates that the parties involved must be informed of the results and the measures taken, while ensuring compliance with data protection requirements.

Section 15 – Diversity, Gender Equality, and Equal Opportunity

To ensure equal opportunity, it is essential that the university and its degree programs have sustainable and comprehensive strategies for addressing diversity, promoting gender equality, and supporting students in special circumstances, and that these strategies are also implemented in the individual degree programs. The university must specify which types of diversity are the focus of these efforts. § 15 ~~therefore~~ stipulates that these requirements must be reviewed during the evaluation.

Section 16 – Special Provisions for Joint--Degree Programs

Section 16 contains special provisions regarding the academic and content-related criteria for joint --degree programs.

Paragraph 1, sentence 1 governs the corresponding application of the subject-specific criteria listed there. Sentence 2 clarifies that for degree programs that meet the requirements of

§ 10, paragraph 1, sentence 1, only the academic content criteria for degree programs (Part 3 of the Regulation) explicitly listed in § 16, paragraph 1, sentence 1, apply. The remaining academic content criteria for degree programs pursuant to (Part 3 of the Regulation) need not be met.

In accordance with Section 11, paragraphs 1 and 2, for joint --degree programs, the intended learning outcomes must be aligned with the corresponding level of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area, as well as with the applicable national qualifications frameworks. These must include knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective discipline(s)

(see B 2.1 and 2.2 EA). In accordance with Section 12(1), sentences 1 and 3, the structure and content of the curriculum must be designed in such a way that they enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes (see B 3.1 EA). The program's design and the teaching, learning, and assessment methods used must serve to achieve the intended learning outcomes (see B 5.1 EA). In accordance with Section 12(2), sentence 1, and Section 12(3), it must be ensured that the staffing is sufficient in terms of both quality and quantity (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the degree programs (see B 7.1 EA). The material resources provided must also be sufficient and appropriate in view of the intended learning outcomes (see B 7.1 EA). In accordance with § 12(4), it must be ensured that the examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes correspond to the intended learning outcomes and that these are consistently applied by the partner universities (B 5.2 EA). In accordance with Section 14, the workload and the average time required to complete the program must be monitored (B 3.3 EA).

Sentence 23 sets forth further requirements arising from the policy agreements of the European Approach.

Point 1 further stipulates that the appropriateness of the admission requirements and the selection process must be assessed in light of the academic level and the academic discipline in which the program is situated (B 4.1 EA). The term "selection process" refers here to tests, interviews, and similar procedures commonly used abroad, and not to a selection process in the legal sense of admission regulations.

Paragraph 2 stipulates that the achievement of the learning outcomes intended by the program can be demonstrated (B 2.3 EA).

Paragraph 3 clarifies that relevant provisions of Directive 2005/36/EC²⁴ of the European Council and the European Parliament of September 7, 2005, on the recognition of professional qualifications, in its currently valid version, must be taken into account in the design and implementation of the program, particularly with regard to regulated professions.

This applies in particular with regard to specified minimum training requirements or common training frameworks (B 2.4 EA).

Number 4 stipulates that the program's design, the teaching and learning methods employed, and the support provided to students must respect and take into account the diversity of the student body and their needs (particularly with regard to their potentially diverse cultural backgrounds) and the specific

²⁴ <https://www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/eu-erkennungrichtlinie.php>
<https://www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/pro/eu-berufsanerkennungsrichtlinie.php>

requirements of mobile students are taken into account (see B 5.1. and B.6 EA).

Paragraph 5 ensures that, when applying the European Approach (EA) at system-accredited institutions of higher education, the formal and subject-specific criteria applicable to joint degree programs are taken into account as part of the quality management system.

Paragraph 2 extends the scope of application of the criteria and procedural rules of the so-called European Approach, as set forth in §§ 10(1) and (2), 16(

4, and § 33(1) to joint degree programs (-) conducted in cooperation with higher education institutions outside the European Higher Education Area, provided that the non-European cooperation partners have committed to applying these principles in a cooperation agreement with the domestic higher education institution.

§ 17 – Concept of the quality management system of system-accredited institutions of higher education (objectives, processes, instruments) and § 18 Measures for implementing the quality management concept of system-accredited institutions of higher education:

Sections 17 and 18 contain special provisions for the procedures set forth in Article 3(1)(1) and (3) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, insofar as these procedures concern the review of internal quality management systems at higher education institutions. These provisions define the core requirements for a functional quality management system in teaching. The specific implementation is left to the individual institution, depending on the respective circumstances.

Section 17 – Concept of the Quality Management System at System-Accredited Higher Education Institutions (Objectives, Processes, Instruments)

Paragraph 1 contains provisions regarding the review of the substantive requirements for a functioning quality management system in teaching. Proof must be provided, according to the sentence

1 The existence of core educational goals for teaching that are reflected in the curricula, and a guiding philosophy for teaching that is reflected in the degree programs. This refers to the description of a binding mission statement for educational goals in teaching at the institution, in which faculty, university administration, faculties, program directors, and student representatives have agreed upon the overarching educational goals in accordance with the institution's profile. This includes a fundamental clarification of the educational institution's self-image, interdisciplinary didactic guidelines, and, where applicable, fundamental qualification objectives.²⁵ A separate "teaching mission statement" is possible, which

²⁵ See the German Science Council's position paper on "Strategies for University Teaching," April 2017, p. 16 ff., <https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/6190-17.pdf>

Integration into the university's mission statement is equally important. The mission statement must ensure that the educational objectives are reflected in the curriculum of the individual degree programs, in terms of competency goals and levels. According to sentence 2, the quality management system is an integral part of the overall strategy for implementing the mission statement; it must therefore fit seamlessly into the university's relevant measures with the aim of further improving the quality of education through a structured and sustainable development process. According to sentence 3, evidence must be provided that the quality management system is structured and implemented in such a way that it ensures, on a permanent and sustainable basis and regularly throughout the respective accreditation cycle, the implementation of the formal and subject-specific criteria for the individual degree programs as set forth in Part 2 and Part 3 (§§ 11 to 15). Sentence 4 lists the central elements of the quality management system for which decision-making processes, competences, and responsibilities must be defined and implemented within the system, namely

- processes for the establishment, review, further development, and discontinuation of degree programs, and
- the procedure for the internal accreditation of degree programs in accordance with the formal and academic criteria set forth in Part 2 and Part 3 (§§ 11–15).

All processes and procedures must be formally established and communicated university-wide. Sentence 5 clarifies that a system-accredited institution of higher education must include provisions regarding validity periods and deadlines in its quality management system. The periods defined in § 26 are maximum limits. In contrast, the reference to § 27 also makes it clear that, in justified individual cases, a period longer than twelve months may be set or extended for the fulfillment of requirements. Sentence 6 clarifies that a system-accredited institution of higher education may establish shorter validity periods and deadlines for accreditation and for the fulfillment of requirements. Sentence 7 clarifies that if a system-accredited institution of higher education wishes to accredit study programs in bundles, it must establish internal procedures within its quality management system for the appropriate determination of the bundle size and composition.

Paragraph 2 regulates the formal requirements for the institution's quality management system and is based on the ESG²⁶. These include

- the development of the quality management system with the participation of all member groups of the institution, i.e., academic and non-academic staff and students, as well as the incorporation of external expertise, such as from the professional practice, from (international)

²⁶ see footnote 11

representatives of other higher education institutions and agencies with experience in quality management at higher education institutions in accordance with ESG Standard 1.1 for the development of the quality assurance strategy (sentence 1);

- Mechanisms to ensure the independence of quality assessments, particularly in the selection and appointment of reviewers and in internal university decision-making processes, in accordance with ESG Standard 2.4 on requirements for peer review experts (sentence 2, first clause);
- the definition of standard procedures for handling conflicts and the establishment of an internal grievance system, particularly for “internal” accreditation decisions, in accordance with ESG Standard 2.7 on complaints and appeals (sentence 2, second clause);
- the existence of closed-loop control systems that ensure, in a structured, transparent, sustainable, and reliable manner, continuous improvement in the quality of study programs, in accordance with ESG Standard 1.9 on the ongoing monitoring and regular review of study programs (sentence 3, first clause);
- the inclusion of all areas of activity directly relevant to studies and teaching (including academic advising, application, admission, and enrollment procedures), examination administration, teaching (including any collaborations), examination systems, student services, human resources development, and continuing education in higher education pedagogy (sentence 3, second half);
- adequate and sustainable resource allocation for the implementation of the measures and processes envisaged in quality management. This includes, in particular, sufficient staff for the design, implementation, and administration of the processes of the quality management system and appropriate IT infrastructure, which is of particular importance for the necessary provision of meaningful data, cf. § 18(3);
- the regular review of the effectiveness of the quality management system with regard to the quality of studies and its further development, based on a continuous evaluation of the processes established within the system and a data-driven monitoring of the results (sentence 4).

Section 18 – Measures for Implementing the Quality Management Concept at System-Accredited Institutions of Higher Education

Paragraph 1 sets forth the key components of the quality management system. According to the first sentence, this system includes regular evaluations of degree programs and the areas of activity relevant to teaching and student studies (see § 17, paragraph 2, sentence 3, second clause) by internal university and -external students, external to the university academic

Experts, representatives from the professional field, and graduates. They ensure that evaluations conducted as part of the internal quality management system are implemented in a way that provides ongoing impetus for quality improvement. To this end, the regular involvement of external expertise is indispensable. In accordance with Standard 1.9 of the ESG (ongoing monitoring and regular review of degree programs), the following aspects in particular should be included in the evaluations: the relevance of the degree programs, changing societal needs, students' workload, academic progress and degrees awarded, the effectiveness of examination procedures, students' expectations and needs, the learning environment, and support services. The results shall be made available to the university community in an appropriate manner, while ensuring compliance with data protection regulations, in order to establish the necessary transparency and acceptance. The second clause in sentence 1 clarifies that the institution may independently determine compliance with the formal criteria within the framework of its quality management system. In assessing the subject-specific criteria, however, the groups specified in § 18(1), sentence 1, must be consulted.

Sentence 2 requires that, if action is needed, appropriate measures be initiated and their implementation be reviewed.

Paragraph 2 clarifies that, in the internal accreditation of degree programs, the participation and approval requirements set forth in § 25(1), sentences 3 through 5, apply to teacher education programs, teacher training programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology/Religion, Protestant theological programs leading to ordination, and other bachelor's and master's programs with the combined subject of Protestant or Catholic Theology. If the internal procedures provide for examination reports, the approval requirement pursuant to § 24(3) applies accordingly.

Paragraph 3 ensures that the data necessary for the development and implementation of the quality management system, as well as for measuring the status of implementation and the effects of the measures taken (see paragraph 1), are collected on a university-wide basis and on a regular basis. Depending on the institution's profile and the quality management system, the following data may be particularly relevant: performance indicators, student body profile, academic progress, completion and dropout rates, student satisfaction with degree programs, available resources and support, and career paths of graduates. When collecting data, care must be taken to ensure that the relevant stakeholders (academic and non-academic staff and students) are involved in the provision and evaluation of the data as well as in the planning of follow-up activities

(see also Standard 1.7 ESG, Information Management).

Paragraph 4 consolidates the documentation and disclosure requirements for system-accredited institutions of higher education regarding internal accreditation decisions into a single provision. Sentence 1 ensures that the institution comprehensively documents its internal accreditation procedures—as well as any measures taken in cases where action is required—and regularly informs all relevant parties, including members of the institution, the sponsoring body, and the state where the institution is located, in an appropriate manner, in order to ensure the necessary transparency. In doing so, data protection requirements under Section 29, Sentence 2 must be observed. Sentence 2 regulates the requirements for the duty of system-accredited institutions of higher education to provide information to the public and the Accreditation Council. The aim is to satisfy the legitimate interest of the public—such as prospective students, current students, and employers—in relevant information regarding the quality assurance of the academic programs offered. As part of the amendment to the Model Statute in 2024, system-accredited higher education institutions are to be relieved of certain reporting obligations. To fulfill the publication requirement, the institution must adhere to the following minimum standards: It enters the data regarding the (re)accreditation of the degree program into the Accreditation Council’s database. In addition to basic information about the program, including the program profile, this includes the accreditation period and, in particular, any conditions imposed, the status of compliance with these conditions, and the names of the evaluators involved in the internal accreditation process, in compliance with data protection requirements pursuant to Section 29, sentence 2, as well as a brief summary of the quality assessment. Universities may optionally provide additional documents (e.g., expert opinions, justifications for accreditation decisions, descriptions of the university’s internal procedures for awarding the seal) for publication in the Accreditation Council’s database. It is clarified that the institution must not only inform the public in an appropriate manner about the results of its internal accreditation procedures, but must also provide the Accreditation Council with the information required for the documentation of the results as stipulated in § 29, sentence 3.

§ 19 – Cooperation with Non-Higher Education Institutions

Section 19 governs the conditions under which a higher education institution may engage in program-related cooperation with non-higher education institutions. A characteristic feature of such program-related collaborations is that degree programs or programs recognized as equivalent are conducted partially or even entirely outside the degree-granting institution, and that the collaborating educational provider is in an asymmetrical, subordinate relationship to the degree-granting institution. In the case of such a collaboration ,

The applicant under Section 22(1) of this regulation is always the institution of higher education. Collaborations with joint academic institutions involving multiple institutions of higher education are not covered by the provisions of Section 19. Sentence 1 makes it clear that the formal and academic criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3 of this regulation also apply to such degree programs. Sentence 2 lists the decisions that, subject to the university's ultimate academic responsibility for the degree program, may not be delegated by the university to a cooperating educational institution. The criterion "procedure for selecting teaching staff" refers primarily to professorial teaching staff. The establishment of standardized criteria is based on the corresponding recommendation of the Science Council "Assessment and Recommendations on Program-Related Collaborations: Franchise, Validation, and Credit Transfer Models" from 2017²⁷. Sentence 2 does not apply to collaborations with state-run teacher training colleges in the second phase of teacher training programs or to school practicum phases in teacher training programs.

§ 20 – University Collaborations

§ 20 governs degree-program-related collaborations between higher education institutions, unless, upon application by the participating domestic higher education institution or institutions in the case of ~~joint_--degree_programs~~, the special provisions contained in §§ 10, 16, and 33 of this regulation apply.

The list of reservations in § 19, sentence 2, applicable to non-university cooperation partners generally does not apply to cooperation between universities. However, the degree-granting university or universities are responsible for the implementation and quality of the program concept. The nature and scope of the cooperation must be documented in a cooperation agreement between the universities.

The degree-granting institution or institutions are the applicants within the meaning of § 22(1) of this Regulation.

If a system-accredited institution of higher education carries out such a program-related cooperation, it may award the Accreditation Council's seal for the program, provided that it itself confers a higher education degree and ensures the implementation and quality of the program concept.

It follows from paragraph 3 that, to streamline procedures, universities may also cooperate at the level of their quality assurance systems and, in doing so, the organizational

²⁷ <https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/5952-17>

Combining multiple procedures is permitted; this requires a coordinated application from the cooperating institutions of higher education in accordance with paragraph 3, sentence 2. This option will be particularly relevant for smaller or, where applicable, private institutions of higher education. Joint use of, for example, quality assurance support services is, in principle, conceivable in order to optimize the use of resources. However, a decision on system accreditation must be made for each cooperating institution of higher education. The Agency's proposed decision must be prepared accordingly.

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

Paragraph 1, sentences 1 and 2, set forth the requirements that individuals must meet in order to serve as full-time faculty members at a vocational academy. Sentences 3 and 4 list additional requirements regarding the quality assurance of teaching staff: 40 percent of the teaching at the vocational academy must be provided by full-time faculty members. Professors at universities of applied sciences or universities who teach at a vocational academy on a long-term part-time basis are counted toward the quorum for the proportion of full-time faculty in the curriculum. All requirements are based on the aforementioned resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated October 15, 2004²⁸ and must also be verified in the accreditation of degree programs at vocational academies.

Paragraph 2 specifies the requirements for individuals who wish to work as part-time instructors at vocational academies in order to ensure the quality of instruction. These requirements are also based on the aforementioned resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated October 15, 2004. For the defined courses, full-time instructors may also, in exceptional cases, be permitted to take on teaching duties.

Paragraph 3 sets forth additional requirements to be established during the accreditation process for degree programs at vocational academies, which arise from their unique staffing structure and the distinctive nature of study across multiple learning locations. These requirements are also based on the aforementioned resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated October 15, 2004.

Part 4 Procedural Rules for Program and System Accreditation

§ 22 – Decision of the Accreditation Council; Awarding of the Seal

Paragraph 1 governs the essential procedural elements for program and system accreditation. Notwithstanding the accreditation procedure ~~previously~~ practiced prior to the entry into force of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation, whereby the respective agency, the via the decided on accreditation , provides the

²⁸ see footnote 2

The State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation provides for a two-part accreditation process: According to Article 3(2), sentence 1, item 1 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, accreditation requires an application by the higher education institution to the Accreditation Council, on the basis of which the Council decides on accreditation by means of an administrative act pursuant to Article 3(5), sentence 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. The administrative procedure thus begins at the time the higher education institution submits its application to the Accreditation Council.

Pursuant to Article 3(5) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the decision of the Accreditation Council includes a determination of compliance with the formal criteria set forth in Article 2(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, on the one hand, and the academic and content-related criteria set forth in Article 2(3) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, on the other. If these criteria are met, accreditation must be granted. This constitutes a binding administrative act within the meaning of Section 35(1) of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG).

The Accreditation Council reviews compliance with the formal criteria on the basis of an audit report. The Accreditation Council reviews compliance with the subject-matter and content criteria on the basis of an expert opinion. Since these are recommendations from the Agency, the Accreditation Council is not bound by these assessments.

Paragraph 2 clarifies that the Accreditation Council's decision is made by means of a written-electronic notice. Pursuant to § 39 VwVfG, administrative acts must generally be substantiated. Sentence 2 is therefore declaratory. In the reasoning for the decision, pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, particular attention must be given to any deviations by the Accreditation Council from the recommendations of the expert opinion regarding the academic and content-related criteria.

Paragraph 3 incorporates Article 3(4) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, according to which the institution is given the opportunity to comment before the final decision is made. To avoid delays in the proceedings, the statement to be obtained by the Accreditation Council is limited, in accordance with administrative procedure law, to cases in which the Accreditation Council intends to deviate significantly from the report's recommendation. The institution is free to attach a statement to the agency's report as part of its application. This ensures compliance with the right to be heard, as expressed in Article 3(4) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

Sentence 2 also sets a one-month deadline for submitting the statement. This deadline is intended to expedite the process.

Paragraph 4 stipulates that, upon successful accreditation, the Accreditation Council shall award its seal to the accredited degree program or quality assurance system. ~~This continues the previous practice.~~ The seal serves to ensure transparency.

In the case of system accreditation, the institution of higher education is granted the right to award the Accreditation Council's seal itself for those degree programs that it has reviewed on its own and that comply with the accreditation rules.

Accreditation with conditions does not result in a postponement of the awarding of the seal. This ensures that, in the case of conditions, a careful distinction is made between deficiencies that do not affect the accreditation decision itself and serious shortcomings that lead to a denial of accreditation.

The degree programs referred to in paragraph 5 are excluded by this provision from the possibility of inclusion in system accreditation and in alternative accreditation procedures. In principle, such inclusion appears conceivable while preserving the respective church participation rights; however, it is procedurally disproportionately burdensome. This applies in particular to the more detailed definition of the role of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Degree Programs in Germany (AKAST) in such a procedure.

The requirement for approval by the competent ecclesiastical authority regarding the Accreditation Council's decision on fully theological and partially theological degree programs takes into account the fact that the expert opinion is of a recommendatory nature and is not binding on the Accreditation Council. This applies analogously to decisions of the Accreditation Council pursuant to Sections 26, 27, and 28.

§ 23 – Documents to be Submitted

Paragraph 1: The application for accreditation must be accompanied by a self-report from the institution and an accreditation report commissioned by the institution from an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council, consisting of an audit report and an expert opinion. The self-report is the self-evaluation report required under Article 3, Paragraph 2, Item 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

In the case of initial system accreditation, the audit report refers to evidence that at least one degree program has undergone the quality management system (Section 3); in the case of renewal of system accreditation, it refers to evidence that all bachelor's and master's degree programs have undergone the quality assurance system at least once (Section 4).

Paragraph 2: In accordance with Article 5, Paragraph 3, Item 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, foreign agencies may generally be admitted to the Accreditation Council

. Accreditation reports commissioned from foreign agencies must be submitted to the Accreditation Council with a German translation, unless they are written in German. This serves to streamline the Accreditation Council's procedures.

Paragraph 3 stipulates, in the interest of a swift and smooth procedure, the obligation to submit applications electronically as soon as the Accreditation Council has established the necessary conditions.

§ 24 – Commissioning of an Agency; Accreditation Report; Site Visit

Paragraph 1: Pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1, Item 4 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the basis for the Accreditation Council's decision is an accreditation report that the institution of higher education has previously commissioned from an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council.

The commissioning of the agency is of a private-law nature pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 2, Sentence 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation.

Sentence 2 addresses the specific provision that, for fully theological degree programs in Catholic Theology, in accordance with the aforementioned "Key Points"²⁹, the evaluation is conducted exclusively by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Degree Programs (AKAST). ~~The role of AKAST must also be taken into account in another respect.~~ Pursuant to Article 5(3)(5) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the Accreditation Council approves agencies under the conditions specified therein. For agencies listed in the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), compliance with these conditions is "presumed unless proven otherwise." ~~However~~, AKAST is ~~not~~ listed in the EQAR. ~~Nevertheless~~, the Accreditation Council had already approved AKAST for the German area even before it was listed in EQAR. The agency is thus effectively engaged in quality assurance activities in its field. The text of the ordinance makes explicit reference to this approval granted by the Accreditation Council. However, this does not preclude a new approval after a reasonable period of time.

Paragraph 2: Program and system accreditation shall be conducted in accordance with Article 3, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1, Item 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, based on a self-evaluation report submitted by the institution of higher education, which must include, at a minimum, information on the institution's quality objectives and on the formal and academic criteria for accreditation. The student body shall be involved in the preparation of the self-evaluation report. The report is

²⁹ see footnote 4

– as is customary under the previous procedure – made available to the agency and subsequently submitted to the Accreditation Council.

The formal and substantive criteria must be listed separately in the self-evaluation report. The report should not exceed 20 pages for program accreditation and 50 pages for system and cluster accreditation. This is intended to simplify the process and make it more efficient.

Paragraphs 3 and 4: Paragraph 3 stipulates that the review report is prepared by the commissioned agency. As a rule, this task is handled by the agency’s administrative office. This relieves the experts on the review panel of the burden of assessing purely formal criteria. The panel of experts is responsible for preparing the expert opinion on the substantive criteria. To this end, it receives the review report in advance. Since the formal and substantive criteria may be interrelated, the review report is not binding on the panel of experts.

For teacher education programs as well as for fully theological and partially theological programs, the review report requires the approval of the respective competent authorities before being forwarded to the Accreditation Council. This takes into account the resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of June 2, 2005, “Key Points for the Mutual Recognition of Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Programs that Provide the Educational Prerequisites for a Teaching Career” (the so-called Quedlinburg Resolution)³⁰as well as the aforementioned “Key Points.”

Both the audit report and the expert opinion contain recommendations regarding the determination of compliance with the relevant criteria for the Accreditation Council; however, these are not binding. The accreditation report thus has the character of an expert opinion.

The provisions regarding the audit report and expert opinion do not include any requirements regarding potential conditions, as these are to be considered only in exceptional cases in the future. If, during the review of the formal criteria, the Agency determines that these criteria have not been met, the institution must be informed immediately so that it may terminate the accreditation process if a positive accreditation decision by the Accreditation Council is not expected. The expert opinion may contain proposals for conditions requiring changes to subject-specific and content-related criteria, the on such deficiencies are limited , the do not result in a negative

³⁰ See footnote 21

accreditation decision and can be remedied within a specified period.

No further specifications regarding the content of the reports are provided. This does not preclude the report from containing, for example, recommendations for the quality development of the degree program or the quality management system that are designed to achieve a level of quality exceeding the standards to be applied by the Accreditation Council in the accreditation process and therefore cannot form the basis for any conditions. In addition, the report may also identify best-practice models within the degree program. Through the publication of the reports—and, where applicable, monitoring by the Accreditation Council—these models can serve as examples for other institutions of higher education. Both can thus contribute to future quality development.

A prerequisite for the Accreditation Council to process applications promptly is that the documents submitted follow a specified template. The ordinance assigns the task of developing a standardized template for expert opinions and audit reports to the Accreditation Council.

To minimize the workload for the agencies and the Accreditation Council, the scope of the expert opinion is limited, with different requirements applying to program, bundle, and system accreditation.

Paragraph 5: ~~As has been the practice to date,~~ the evaluation process includes a site visit by the evaluation committee, which generally takes place on-site and during which the committee can form its own impression of the general conditions of the degree program to be accredited and engage in dialogue with the responsible faculty members, students, and university administration. With regard to the mandatory spot checks required in system accreditation to verify the relevant characteristics of program design, program implementation, and quality assurance, as well as, where applicable, compliance with the criteria for the accreditation of regulated degree programs, two dates are generally required for system accreditation procedures. Digital or hybrid inspection formats and elements are also possible. However, there is no deviation from the principle of an in-person on-site inspection. In the design of the evaluation process, the quality of the evaluation is clearly the primary focus. An exceptional deviation from the principle of an on-site visit may be considered, particularly in cases of force majeure where an on-site visit is impossible for reasons beyond one's control (e.g., severe weather, strikes, pandemics).

For degree programs that are newly developed by the institution and are not yet offered, the review committee may, by mutual agreement, decide to

An on-site visit may be waived if it does not add value to the assessment of the technical and substantive criteria based on documentation (concept accreditation). The same applies in the case of reaccreditation. In addition, there may be circumstances in which an on-site visit can be waived in individual cases due to special circumstances or characteristics related to the subject of accreditation, without compromising the quality of the evaluation. These include, for example, visits for online or distance learning programs with a digital campus, or visits involving experts who would otherwise be unable to participate. Hybrid site visits are also possible in these cases. Purely economic reasons, however, are not sufficient grounds for an exception. Deviations from the principle of on-site visits must be adequately justified and will be reviewed by the Accreditation Council during the application review process.

Paragraph 6 establishes the possibility of an optional “quality” or “Quality improvement loop” between higher education institutions and agencies. This additional step gives higher education institutions the opportunity to address and resolve any issues identified regarding the subject of accreditation before the application is forwarded to the Accreditation Council. The implementation of this additional procedural step is documented in a transparent manner in the accreditation report.

§ 25 – Composition of the Review Panel; Requirements for Reviewers

Paragraph 1 regulates the minimum size of the review panel and its composition for program accreditation. This allows for larger review panels in complex procedures—such as bundled accreditations—provided that the ratio of the represented groups is maintained.

Based on Article 4, Paragraph 3, Sentence 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the majority of the review panel consists of university faculty members. This implements the requirement of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation that university faculty members must hold the majority of votes (weighted if necessary) on the panel responsible for the review. Furthermore, Article 3(2), sentence 1, item 3 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation is specified and implemented with regard to the parties to be involved in the accreditation process.

Sentence 3, first clause, specifies—in light of the particularities of degree programs that qualify students for admission to the preparatory service for a teaching career—that a representative of the highest state authority responsible for the school system shall replace a representative from the professional field. This preserves the committee’s expertise without further

. The provision establishes minimum standards. The states may stipulate more extensive participation requirements.

In the evaluation of the degree programs referred to in the second half of the third sentence and in the fourth sentence, the participation of the respective competent church authority is required. In this regard, the specific implementation of this provision follows the principle that, for fully theological and partially theological degree programs, church ministry is the most commonly chosen field of professional practice overall. Therefore, it is natural for the churches to represent professional practice in this context. For religious education teachers, the civil service generally represents the professional career path. In this case, as with all other teacher training programs, representation for professional practice is provided by the highest state authority responsible for the school system. The church representative then joins as an additional member of the review panel.

All reviewers must belong to a field of study closely related to the program to be accredited.

Sentence 5 stipulates that, for teacher training programs and the aforementioned theological programs, the issuance of the expert opinion requires the consent of the relevant representatives. This takes into account, on the one hand, the resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated June 2, 2005, “Key Points for the Mutual Recognition of Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Programs that Provide the Educational Prerequisites for a Teaching Career” (the so-called Quedlinburg Resolution)³¹. Since the accreditation decision has been transferred to the Accreditation Council by the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the requirement for approval—without which the expert opinion cannot be submitted to the Accreditation Council—corresponds, on the other hand, to the intention of the aforementioned “Key Points ...”³², since the accreditation decision can thus only be made following a positive evaluation by AKAST and therefore not against its vote.

Paragraph 2: In the case of institutional accreditation, the composition of the review panel corresponds in principle to that of program accreditation. However, the minimum number of reviewers is higher in view of the complexity and effort involved in institutional accreditation. The subject-specific requirements for reviewers do not apply because, in institutional accreditation , no degree programs are reviewed , but rather the

³¹ See footnote no. 21

³² See footnote no. 4

the institution's own quality assurance system. Therefore, experts are not required to have a disciplinary affinity with a specific field of study.

Paragraph 3, sentence 1, is intended to ensure that, in review panels exceeding the minimum size specified in paragraphs 1 and 2, university faculty members hold the majority of votes. This takes into account Article 3, paragraph 2, item 5 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, according to which accreditation procedures are conducted with the participation of this group.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 stipulate that the majority of the members of the review panel must already have experience with the respective form of accreditation. This serves to ensure the efficiency of the process and enhances the quality and acceptance of the review.

Paragraph 4: The review panel is assembled by the commissioned agency. When appointing individual reviewers, the agencies are 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.

Paragraph 5: The State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation requires, in Article 3, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1, Number 3, that evaluators be external and independent. According to items 1 and 2, therefore, persons who work at or study at the institution whose degree programs or quality management system are to be evaluated are excluded from participating in an evaluation panel. Furthermore, pursuant to item 3, the standard rules on conflicts of interest applicable in academia, in particular those of the German Research Foundation (DFG), apply to the evaluators.

Paragraph 6: Prior to the appointment of the reviewers, the institution is informed by the Agency of the composition of the review panel and is given the opportunity to comment. This significantly increases acceptance of the review panel and the review process within the institution and the degree program to be accredited.

§ 26 – Validity Period of Accreditation; Extension

Paragraph 1: The validity period for initial accreditation is uniformly eight years. From a legal standpoint, this constitutes a time limit within the meaning of Section 36 of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG). This standardizes and significantly extends the accreditation periods of five years (program accreditation) and six years (system accreditation) that were customary prior to the adoption of the Model Statutory Ordinance. This is intended to reduce the effort and costs associated with accreditation. In sentence 1, the start of the validity period is set to the beginning of the semester or trimester in which the accreditation decision is announced , to avoid disadvantages for

students who complete their studies in the semester or trimester in which the accreditation decision is made. In addition, alignment between the semester or trimester and the accreditation periods is ensured.

Sentence 2 addresses the case of program-level accreditation, in which the program has not yet been launched at the time the accreditation decision is announced. In the case of program-level accreditation, the accreditation period begins with the start of the semester or trimester in which the program is first offered, but no later than the start of the second semester or trimester following the announcement of the accreditation decision. This ensures that the accreditation decision remains current and that a delayed launch of a degree program does not result in a disproportionately long period for reaccreditation.

In the first sentence of paragraph 2, the term “reaccreditation” is defined as a subsequent accreditation that follows immediately and without interruption after the validity period of an initial accreditation. The validity period of reaccreditation is also set uniformly at eight years, as opposed to the periods of seven years for program accreditation and eight years for system accreditation that ~~were customary~~ prior to the adoption of the Model Statutory Ordinance. The elimination of different reaccreditation periods serves to simplify the process and takes into account both the universities’ interest in legal certainty and the goal of continuous and reliable quality assurance. If an application is submitted in a timely manner—that is, before the expiration of the accreditation period—the period is automatically extended for the duration of the administrative procedure, i.e., until the Accreditation Council renders its decision. This serves to prevent gaps in accreditation for the protection of graduates. Sentence 3 ensures that, for applications submitted well before the expiration of the accreditation period, the accreditation decision takes effect within a reasonable period of time.

~~Paragraph 3, sentence 1 addresses the special situation in which a higher education institution does not intend to continue an accredited degree program beyond the accreditation period. Since reaccreditation for an expiring degree program would entail disproportionately high costs, the Accreditation Council may extend the validity period of the accreditation until the students have completed their studies.~~

Paragraph 3, sentence 1, governs the options for extending the validity period of the accreditation. Sentences 2 and 3 contain provisions for the situation where a higher education institution seeks bundle accreditation or transitions from program accreditation to system accreditation. In these cases, the institution shall

can focus their efforts and be relieved of the burden of program accreditation for degree programs that will be covered by the planned cluster or system accreditation. Paragraph 2 introduces the possibility of deadline extensions in program and system accreditation in justified exceptional cases. This relieves the burden on higher education institutions in exceptional situations that are wholly or partially beyond their control. Reasons for a case-by-case decision include, for example, accidents and exceptional national or international situations (pandemics, floods, etc.). Planned personnel or structural changes in the degree program or in the administration do not justify an extension in individual cases. Furthermore, an extension of the accreditation deadline is not cumulative (e.g., an extension due to a bundled accreditation followed by one due to the preparation of a system accreditation), but is limited to a maximum of two years in total. In the case of a planned bundle accreditation, the number of degree programs for which the accreditation period is to be extended should be in a reasonable proportion to the number of those degree programs whose accreditation period is decisive for the new accreditation period to be set. This generally means: “the minority adapts to the majority.”

~~To this end, the Accreditation Council may extend the validity period of a program accreditation by up to two years if the institution can demonstrate that it is preparing a corresponding application for accreditation (sentence 2).~~ If the accreditation period for an accredited degree program expires at a time when the institution has already submitted an application for system accreditation to the Accreditation Council, the validity period may be extended for the duration of the administrative proceedings before the Accreditation Council plus one year (sentence ~~23~~). The option to extend the period by a further year is necessary to give the institution, in the event of a transition to institutional accreditation, the time required to evaluate the program in question according to the quality management system it has developed until the seal is awarded.

Sentence 3 addresses the special situation in which an accredited degree program is not to be continued by the institution beyond the accreditation period. Since reaccreditation for an expiring degree program would entail disproportionately high costs, the Accreditation Council may extend the validity period of the accreditation until the students have completed their studies.

Furthermore, the option previously available prior to the adoption of the Model Statute—to extend the validity period of an initial accreditation because a reaccreditation report was not completed in time—is no ~~longer~~ applicable. The validity periods of accreditations would be standardized, so that if an agency is commissioned in a timely manner, ~~there would~~ no ~~longer be~~ a need for an exception

. Furthermore, compliance with deadlines within the framework of quality assurance measures should be reasonable.

Section 27 – Conditions

Under the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, higher education institutions are entitled to accreditation if and to the extent that the subject of accreditation meets the formal and substantive accreditation criteria. Accreditation is therefore a mandatory administrative act. Pursuant to Article 9(1), sentence 2, second clause of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, it may be subject to an ancillary provision (condition, reservation of revocation, requirement, reservation of requirements) if such a provision is intended to ensure that the legal requirements for accreditation are met.

Paragraph 1 stipulates that a deadline of generally twelve months must be set for the fulfillment of a condition. This deadline takes into account the fact that changes to degree programs or quality management systems are often time-consuming to implement. For special cases, such as those requiring the conduct of an appointment procedure, an extension of the deadline may be granted upon application by the institution (paragraph 2).

Paragraph 3 clarifies that compliance with the condition must be demonstrated to the Accreditation Council that imposed the condition, and not to the agency commissioned to prepare the accreditation report. Confirmation from the agency that the condition has been met is not required; rather, this must be verified by the Accreditation Council itself. This serves to reduce costs.

§ 28 – Obligation to Report Changes

Paragraph 1: Since accreditation is a continuing administrative act and changes regarding formal or subject-specific criteria may arise during the accreditation's validity period, significant changes must be reported to the Accreditation Council without delay. Significant changes may include, in particular, changes affecting the program name, standard duration of study, degrees awarded, program design, qualification objectives, profile, and content of the programs. A significant change may also occur when specializations are established that result in substantially different competencies among graduates, or when an identical curriculum is offered in different formats, at different locations, or by different partners.

The reporting requirement enables the Accreditation Council to verify that its accreditation decision remains current and, if necessary,

changes—where necessary—to adapt to the new circumstances (e.g., by imposing a subsequent condition or revoking the accreditation decision).

Paragraph 2 clarifies that a notification of change by the institution obligates the Accreditation Council to examine whether the significant change affects the accreditation decision. The subsequent decision by the Accreditation Council constitutes a declaratory administrative act that may be challenged by the institution in isolation. If the accreditation decision is revoked, it is appropriate to submit an application for re-accreditation. This clarification serves to ensure legal certainty.

§ 29 – Publication

Article 3(6), sentence 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation provides that the decisions of the Accreditation Council and the expert reports shall be published in an appropriate manner. This is further specified in § 29, sentence 1, whereby, in light of the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines, the accreditation report—and thus the expert opinions and audit report—is expressly included in the publication requirement in addition to the accreditation decision.

Publication on the Accreditation Council’s website enables quick and timely access by interested students, prospective students, university members, and authorities.

Sentence 2 governs the handling of personal data. This includes, in particular, the names of the experts.

~~Sentence 3 extends the publication requirement to the internal accreditation decisions of system-accredited higher education institutions. In this context, the data protection regulations under sentence 2 apply accordingly.~~

§ 30 – Bundled Accreditation; Partial System Accreditation

Paragraph 1: The existing option to combine multiple degree programs into a bundled accreditation during program accreditation remains in place. However, to ensure practicality and maintain the quality of the procedures, no more than ten degree programs should be evaluated by a single committee. If more than ten degree programs are scheduled for program accreditation and are closely related in terms of subject matter, multiple bundles must be formed. Since this is a guideline, exceptions to larger bundles are possible only in atypical situations, provided the quality of the evaluation is maintained. Regarding the possibility of a

Reference is made to the size of the review panel, as specified in § 25(1), which is adapted to the requirements of bundled accreditation.

Common structural features of several degree programs do not in themselves constitute a subject-matter affinity.

Sentence 2 clarifies that each degree program must meet the subject-specific and content-related criteria and that this must be assessed separately. This applies in any case to the formal criteria under Part 2 and the review report.

With Paragraph 2, Sentence 1, the amendment to the Model Statutory Ordinance in 2024: Since the composition of a bundle is of some significance for the subsequent review and the composition of the review panel, the possibility of prior approval of the specific composition of the bundle by the Accreditation Council is established. This serves to ensure legal certainty in the subsequent proceedings and is consistent with previous practice. To ensure legal certainty for the entire process, a prior approval procedure for bundles comprising more than four degree programs by the Accreditation Council—which was previously optional—is introduced. Approval must be obtained by the institution prior to submitting the application for accreditation and should take place as early as possible before the start of the accreditation process to ensure a smooth procedure. The aim is to ensure an appropriate evaluation at the level of individual degree programs even for larger bundles, and thus to guarantee the quality of the accreditation procedures. This is intended to avoid any necessary re-evaluations. Pursuant to Section 30(1), sentence 3, bundles shall not comprise more than ten degree programs; however, exceptions remain possible.

Since combined degree programs involve the evaluation of a large number of component programs whose academic focus may vary significantly, paragraph 2 stipulates that groups comprising two or more combined degree programs must be approved in advance by the Accreditation Council.

Paragraph 3 allows, in exceptional cases, for the system accreditation of a subunit of a higher education institution responsible for organizing studies (e.g., continuing education institutes or individual faculties). The requirements in sentence 2 are cumulative. The option of subsystem accreditation serves primarily to facilitate higher education institutions' entry into system accreditation. Multiple, permanent partial system accreditations within a higher education institution are not the aim of this provision. For this reason, the quality management system of the subunit must be embedded within the higher education institution (sentence 2, item 2).

Regarding § 31 – Random Sampling

Paragraph 1: In system and subsystem accreditation, the review panel conducts a random sample. ~~This remains justified with regard to the extension of the validity period of the system accreditation.~~

Paragraph 2: Pursuant to item 1, the spot check must demonstrate, using a degree program to be specified by the review panel, that the quality management system ensures the consideration of all formal and subject-specific criteria in the university's internal accreditation process. In addition, the sample under paragraph 2 refers to formal and subject-specific criteria to be determined by the review panel, compliance with which must be ensured by the quality management system under review.

Paragraph 3: The rules on participation set forth in § 25(1) apply analogously to the samples as well. See the rationale provided there.

Part 5 – Procedural Rules for Special Types of Degree Programs

§ 32 – Combined Degree Programs

Paragraph 1 defines the characteristics of a combined degree program. Such a program consists of two or more fields of study. Students or applicants may choose from several possible combinations. For the purposes of this regulation, the fields of study within a combined degree program are considered sub-programs.

Paragraph 2 clarifies that the subject of accreditation is the combined degree program. The criteria for accreditation (Parts 2 and 3 of this regulation) must be applied to the combined degree program as such, i.e., at the level of the disciplines (i.e., component degree programs as defined in Section 32, Paragraph 1) and not to any elective modules. This applies in particular to the requirements under § 12. The institution must have a coherent concept for the entirety of the combined program offerings that integrates the qualification objectives of the component programs. Feasibility must be ensured in principle for all possible combinations; in this regard, the criteria for assessing feasibility defined in § 12(5) must be applied. For example, the “extensive absence of overlap between courses and examinations” must be ensured.

Pursuant to paragraph 3, additional partial degree programs may be retroactively included in the accreditation of a combined degree program. The aforementioned requirements apply accordingly. The accreditation period for the combined degree program remains unchanged.

Paragraph 4 governs the format of the accreditation certificate for combined degree programs. In all other respects, the procedural rules of Part 4 apply in accordance with paragraph 5.

§ 33 – Joint --Degree Programs

This provision contains special procedural rules for joint --degree programs. It is based on the political agreements regarding the European Approach (EA). Accordingly, the accreditation decision of the Accreditation Council is structured here as a decision to recognize an evaluation by an agency registered with EQAR (see A 1, first indent, EA). Such a decision is required only in proceedings under Article 3(1)(2) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation (program accreditation), as the application of the criteria relevant to joint-degree programs at system-accredited institutions is ensured by Section 16(5) of this Regulation (see A 2. indent EA).

Since the European approach cannot be applied to full-theology and partial-theology degree programs, the general regulations apply to joint degree programs in these fields.

Paragraph 1, sentence 1, stipulates that the evaluation may be conducted by an agency registered with EQAR at the request of the cooperating institutions and that this decision may serve as the basis for an accreditation decision at the request of the participating domestic institution(s). It is not necessary for this agency to have been approved by the Accreditation Council. To the extent that an agency accredited by the Accreditation Council is involved, this takes place outside the scope of the accreditation granted by the Accreditation Council. The scope of application is further limited to degree programs in which only domestic higher education institutions and higher education institutions from participating states of the European Higher Education Area cooperate.

Sentence 2 stipulates that proof of compliance with the criteria for joint--degree programs set forth in §10 and §16, Parts 2 and 3 of this Regulation is a prerequisite for a positive accreditation decision. The formal criteria for degree programs that are not explicitly mentioned in § 10(2) and the subject-specific criteria for degree programs not mentioned in § 16(1), sentence 1, need not be met. Furthermore, sentence 2 specifies the requirements for the evaluation procedure in detail.

Paragraph 1 establishes a requirement to notify the Accreditation Council prior to initiating such a procedure. This is intended to ensure that, even before the procedure is initiated, it is verified whether the scope of this regulation applies to accreditation decisions regarding joint--degree programs.

Points 2 through 5 correspond to the requirements for external quality assurance procedures for joint ~~degree programs~~ set forth in the European Approach A. This includes a self-evaluation report submitted jointly by the cooperating institutions. This report must contain comprehensive information demonstrating compliance with the requirements applicable to joint degree programs. In addition, the report contains the necessary information on the respective national frameworks of the cooperating institutions, which foreign agencies and experts may require to assess the context, particularly with regard to the program's classification within the national higher education system. The self-evaluation report explicitly focuses on the specific characteristics of the joint --degree program as a collaborative endeavor involving universities from more than one national higher education system (Number 2; see C 1 EA). The site visit enables the review panel to discuss the Joint --Degree Program on the basis of the self-report and to assess whether the program meets the requirements for Joint --Degree Programs. The site visit therefore includes discussions with representatives of all cooperating institutions, in particular with institutional leadership and program coordinators and -coordinators, staff, students, and other relevant stakeholders, such as alumni and representatives from the professional field. Although the site visit is generally limited to a single location, the delivery of the program at all locations is taken into account in the evaluation (Section 3, see C 3 EA). The review panel prepares a report containing relevant evidence, analyses, and conclusions regarding the requirements for Joint --Degree Programs. The report also includes recommendations for the program's further development. In addition, the review panel issues a recommendation for the decision. The conclusions and recommendations pay particular attention to the specific characteristics of the Joint --Degree Program. The institutions are given the opportunity to comment on the draft version of the report, including to point out any factual errors (Number 4, see C.4 EA). The review panel, consisting of at least four members, combines expertise in the relevant subjects or disciplines—including the labor market/professional world in the respective fields—with expertise in the area of quality assurance in higher education. Thanks to its international expertise and experience, the review panel can take into account the specific characteristics of the joint degree program. The review panel as a whole possesses knowledge of the higher education systems of the participating institutions as well as the languages of instruction used. The review panel includes members from at least two countries participating in the consortium that offer the program. The review panel must include at least one student or a

Student representative. The provisions of § 25, paragraph 3, sentence 1 (majority of university faculty members in the evaluation), paragraph 5 (exclusion of reviewers to avoid conflicts of interest), and paragraph 6 (the university's right to comment) apply accordingly (item 5, see C.2 EA).

Number 6 stipulates that a positive accreditation decision based on a corresponding evaluation can only be made if this evaluation has been substantiated, any conditions have been met, and the decision is final. Thus, it is not the responsibility of the Accreditation Council, but rather of the agency entrusted with the evaluation, to ensure that the decision is comprehensible to the institutions and that the follow-up process—including, where applicable, the fulfillment of conditions—has been completed.

Pursuant to Section 7, the agency is also required to publish at least a summary of the report, including the evaluation and justification, on its website in English. If the evaluation was not conducted in English, at least the English summary of the report and an English version of the evaluation, including its rationale, must be published (see C 5, 7, and 8 EA). This is intended to facilitate international cooperation at the program level and in the area of quality assurance.

Sentence 3 clarifies that the Accreditation Council's decision on accreditation—which serves to recognize the evaluation—must also be issued in writing, must be substantiated, must give the institution an opportunity to comment within one month, and, in the event of a positive decision, must be accompanied by the Accreditation Council's seal (Section 22, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4(1)). The accreditation decision takes effect at the beginning of the semester or trimester following its announcement, in accordance with Section 26(1), first sentence. Reaccreditation must be applied for and initiated in a timely manner before the expiration of the accreditation period (Section 26(2), first sentence). For accreditation decisions regarding joint degree programs, the institution must also notify the Accreditation Council of any significant changes (Section 28), and the decision, along with the expert opinion, must be published by the Accreditation Council. The same applies to internal accreditation decisions by system-accredited institutions regarding joint degree programs. Sentence 4 clarifies that the accreditation procedure under § 33 is optional. Higher education institutions therefore have the choice, even for joint programs within the meaning of §§ 10(1) and 16(1), to apply for recognition of the accreditation decision by the Accreditation Council in accordance with the European approach under § 33 or to obtain accreditation under § 22. This is conceivable, for example, if the European approach is not implemented, or not fully implemented, in a partner country of the German institution of higher education and national accreditation rules must therefore be observed. Furthermore,

Sentence 4 clarifies that the special provisions of Sections 10 and 16 also apply even if the accreditation decision is not made in accordance with Section 33. Sentence 45 stipulates that, in the case of accreditation and reaccreditation, the accreditation period is only 6 years, in accordance with the European approach and in deviation from § 26(1) and (2), first sentence (see C 9 EA). Sentence 56 ensures, in the interest of transparency, that accreditation decisions issued on the basis of the recognition of an evaluation of ~~joint_-- degree programs~~ are identifiable as such upon publication. The same applies, according to sentence 67, to the information on the study program in the degree documents (in particular the Diploma Supplement).

Paragraph 2 extends the scope of application of the criteria and procedural rules of the European Approach, as set forth in Sections 10(1) and (2), 16(1), and § 33(1) to ~~joint_-- degree programs~~ conducted in cooperation with higher education institutions outside the European Higher Education Area, provided that the non-European cooperation partners have committed to applying these principles in a cooperation agreement with the domestic higher education institution.

Part 6 – Alternative Accreditation Procedures pursuant to Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation

§ 34 – Alternative Accreditation Procedures

Paragraph 1: The provision in § 34 implements the option opened up in Article 4(4) in conjunction with Article 3(1)(3) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation for alternative accreditation pathways to system and program accreditation, which are also subject to the criteria set forth in Article 2.

Paragraph 2 also requires that alternative procedures comply with the formal and substantive criteria set forth in Parts 2 and 3. In addition, the requirements for appropriate academic participation as set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation—particularly in Article 3, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1—and in the Model Statutory Ordinance must be observed in accordance with the ESG and the guidelines of the Federal Constitutional Court in its decision of February 17, 2016. If teacher training programs and programs in Protestant or Catholic theology are also included in the alternative procedures, the participation and approval requirements set forth in the Model Statutory Ordinance apply. There is no obligation for higher education institutions to use an agency.

Paragraph 3: If a university intends to implement an alternative procedure, this requires the prior approval of both the Accreditation Council and the competent state science authority of the respective state. This ensures that the science authority from beginning at is involved , the in this process also the

Requirements for regulated professions are ensured. The basis for approval is a description of the proposed procedure; in assessing whether this procedure meets the quality assurance requirements set forth in the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and the Model Statutory Ordinance, the Accreditation Council may consult external experts. The application to be submitted following approval must also be submitted to the Accreditation Council via the competent science authority.

In consultation with the state, the Accreditation Council may only refuse its approval if the alternative procedure cannot ensure compliance with the requirements under Article 2 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation and the principles for the appropriate involvement of the academic community. Furthermore, the alternative procedure should also provide additional insights into quality assurance that go beyond program and system accreditation.

Paragraph 4: The specific details of the procedure are regulated in rules of procedure.

Paragraph 5: The alternative procedure is limited to a maximum of eight years, meaning that shorter durations may also be provided for in these cases. As in the case of system accreditation, the institution of higher education also retains the right, within the framework of the alternative procedure, to award the Accreditation Council's seal to the degree programs it has reviewed. The extension options provided for in § 26, paragraph 3, sentence 3, apply accordingly. Even within the framework of alternative procedures, care must be taken to ensure a seamless accreditation chain in the interest of the students.

The Accreditation Council oversees the alternative procedure, which must be evaluated by an independent, research-oriented institution in a timely manner prior to the expiration of the project period as a prerequisite for continuing the procedure.

Part 7 – Miscellaneous

Section 35 – Relationship to Procedures Concerning the Suitability of a Degree Program for Professional Licensing Purposes

Paragraph 1 extends the ~~existing~~ option to coordinate accreditation procedures with procedures that determine a degree program's eligibility under professional licensing laws, even within the framework of the new accreditation system. The provision is intended as an invitation to the relevant state authorities to use accreditation procedures to assess, in the interest of students, the suitability of a degree program with regard to

access to regulated professions. To date, this option has been utilized particularly in the fields of auditing and social work/social pedagogy. In the future, this option could play a role within the framework of the planned academic training for health professions. The linking of the procedures requires a corresponding application from the institution of higher education.

Paragraph 2 clarifies that the external experts to be consulted regarding professional suitability have merely an advisory role and do not influence the accreditation decision. The accreditation decision, on the one hand, and the decision regarding the determination of professional suitability based on professional regulations, on the other hand, are legally separate decisions. The latter is made by a separate notice from the relevant state authority to the institution of higher education.

This provision applies only to models that distinguish between academic study and practical phases (for example, for the purpose of obtaining state recognition). Single-phase models with integrated practical training periods remain unaffected.

§ 36 – Evaluation

~~Paragraph 1 provides for an evaluation three years after the regulation enters into force to review its application and effects.~~

~~Paragraph 2: The results of the evaluation must be submitted to the Conference of Ministers of Education so that appropriate measures can be taken if necessary. The provisions of the Model Statutory Ordinance adopted by resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education on December 7, 2017 pursuant to Article 4 paragraph 1–4~~

~~the evaluation provided for in § 36, paragraph 1 of the MRVO, pursuant to the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, was conducted three years after the MRVO entered into force.~~

~~The new regulation allows for flexible structuring of future reviews and any necessary revisions to the provisions of the Model Statute. Changes may also be made on an ad hoc basis and may apply to individual provisions or a subset of them. At the same time, the amendment takes into account Article 15 of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, which also provides for regular evaluations within a reasonable timeframe. In this respect, the amendment also serves to harmonize the two regulations as well as to simplify and synchronize future processes.~~

§ 37 Entry into Force

~~Transitional provisions regarding the expected time lag between the entry into force of the State Treaty on Study Accreditation and the state regulations were not adopted, as a retroactive~~

~~The retroactive entry into force of the regulations ensures that no gap in accreditation will arise. Since all relevant stakeholders have been sufficiently informed about the transition of the accreditation system through the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court and the drafting of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, such retroactive entry into force is legally permissible.~~

~~Furthermore, for program or system accreditation procedures that had already begun prior to the effective date of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation, the previous regulations—including those regarding the validity period of accreditation—apply to the conclusion of such procedures pursuant to Article 16(1) of the State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation. For reaccreditation procedures, provided that the agreement was not concluded prior to the entry into force of the State Treaty, only the provisions of this ordinance apply. This applies in particular to issues regarding the extension of accreditation, the obligation to notify changes, and the application requirements for reaccreditation. This means that proof of an interim evaluation is no longer required for an application for system reaccreditation.~~