

STIFTUNG
Akkreditierungsrat 

Annual Report 2020



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For the sake of readability, gender-neutral language is sometimes omitted in favor of the feminine form. In the spirit of equal treatment, such terms apply equally and universally to both women and men.

Activity Report 2020

Reporting Period: January through December

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Foreword

For the Accreditation Council, 2020 was marked by the anticipated first wave of applications under the new accreditation system and the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the constructive and pragmatic cooperation of all full-time and volunteer staff at the Accreditation Council and its office, the applications were largely processed despite the ad hoc adjustments necessitated by the pandemic. Nevertheless, it became apparent that the Accreditation Council's role as "final decision-maker" and "guarantor of consistency" entails more effort than had been assumed in 2017/18 during the initial planning phase.

The Electronic Information and Application System (ELIAS), introduced in 2019, remains indispensable; in addition to its database function, it enables paperless application submission and processing. The ELIAS training sessions offered by the Secretariat were very well received. The willingness of all participants to embrace the electronic process and master its use has been a decisive factor in enabling the Accreditation Council to fulfill its duties even under full workload.

Our long-standing chair, Professor Dr. Reinhold R. Grimm, guided us through the challenges of 2020. Professor Grimm served as chair of the Accreditation Council for nearly 14 years, skillfully transitioning the accreditation system to the new legal framework and successfully introducing all members and stakeholders to this new system. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for his tireless dedication.

I assumed his position on January 27, 2021. I thank the members of the Accreditation Council for the trust they have placed in me to now take on this task.

In 2020, the number of applications received for program accreditation nearly doubled compared to 2019, despite the

the option to extend deadlines due to the pandemic, compared to 2019. In addition, alongside six system accreditations, two alternative procedures were launched for the first time. I am pleased that higher education institutions are daring to break new ground even in difficult times.

The "Quality Development Award" was presented for the first time in 2020. The winner was Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences for its application for reaccreditation of the "Biomedical Technology (B.Eng)" program. The program is characterized by student-centered teaching and learning, the mandatory practical/study abroad semester, the mid-semester exam period, and the faculty exchange sessions.

In light of the high volume of applications, the secretariat has further expanded its staff. In addition to preparing case files and decision documents, it has also successfully managed the last-minute adjustments necessitated by the pandemic.

I would like to thank all individuals and institutions working on a volunteer basis for the Accreditation Council for their commitment, which far exceeds what could reasonably be expected. This is evident not only in the quarterly Council meetings and the careful preparation of meeting documents, but also in the work for the various committees, in the intensive communication between the Secretariat and Accreditation Council members, and, of course, in the representation of the Accreditation Council at external events.

Bonn, June 2021



Prof. Dr.-Ing. Hans-Joachim Bargstädt

Overview

1. Quarter 2020

103. Meeting of the Accreditation Council on March 3–4, 2020, in Potsdam

AR Resolutions:

- 87 applications for program accreditation (covering 192 degree programs due to mergers), all of which were addressed and three of which were deferred
- Adoption of an interim report marking the halfway point of the current members' term of office, which runs until the end of 2021

Award for Quality Development

- First-time awarding of the "Award for Quality Development" to Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences

Board of Trustees resolutions:

- Revision of the template for accreditation reports
- Approval of the agencies AQ Austria and evalag—based on their registration with EQAR—to operate in Germany

2. Second quarter of 2020

104. Meeting of the Accreditation Council on June 4, 2020, held online for the first time

AR resolutions:

- 105 applications for program accreditation (covering 206 degree programs due to mergers), two postponed (107 applications in total)
- One application for system accreditation
- Initiation of an alternative procedure (Harz University of Applied Sciences)

3. Second quarter of 2020

105. Meeting of the Accreditation Council on September 29, 2020, online

AR resolutions:

- 148 applications for program accreditation (covering 446 degree programs due to mergers)
- Two initial applications for institutional accreditation
- Decision under the experimental clause regarding the procedures of Pforzheim University, HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management, and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
- Launch of a second alternative procedure (joint application by three universities in Baden-Württemberg)
- Decision to postpone the deadline for the mandatory publication of quality reports at system-accredited universities to March 31, 2021, due to the pandemic
- Decision to apply for extraordinary deadline extensions no later than three months before the expiration of the accreditation period for accreditations expiring on September 30, 2021
- Approval of the AHPGS agency—based on its registration with EQAR—for its activities in Germany
- Resolution to allow higher education institutions to self-nominate for the Quality Development Award

4. Q1 2020

106. Meeting of the Accreditation Council on December 8–9, 2020, online

AR resolutions:

- 97 applications for program accreditation (covering 189 degree programs due to mergers), two of which were deferred
- Three applications for system accreditation, two of which were reaccreditations
- Decision under the experimental clause regarding the application from the University of Siegen
- Decision to extend the application deadline to twelve weeks for initial accreditations due to the high volume of applications

1. Current developments

1.1 New Chair

The Accreditation Council has a new chair. Professor Dr.-Ing. Hans-Joachim Bargstädt was elected by mail ballot at the end of 2020 following the 106th meeting. On January 27, 2021, he succeeded Professor Dr. Reinhold R. Grimm, who had chaired the Accreditation Council for nearly 14 years.

1.2 Mid-term review

At its 103rd meeting, halfway through its current term, the Accreditation Council took stock of its work to date.¹

The following key findings were noted:

- The shift in policy intended by the federal states—where conditions are to become the exception rather than the rule—has been achieved. Conditions were still imposed in 31% (previously: 84%) of all cases. The content of the conditions under the new law requires further quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- At its inaugural meeting in early 2018, the Accreditation Council decided not to draft comprehensive policy and planning documents in advance, but rather to develop its strategy in a modular fashion, drawing on concrete administrative practice. The primary focus has always been on ensuring the new accreditation system's operational effectiveness.
- The Accreditation Council's decision-making has focused on consolidating criteria regarding staffing, academic success, and the specific profile requirements for dual and part-time degree programs

, although further discussion is still needed. Common to all these topics is the guiding principle of granting universities the greatest possible freedom in how they implement changes, even where development needs have been identified.

The accreditation system under the new legislation is currently still in a transitional phase. The statements made in this review should therefore be considered preliminary.

1.3 Number of applications

Since the winter semester of 2020/21, the new accreditation system has been undergoing a "stress test" due to the high volume of applications for program accreditation and the significant increase in applications expected for 2021/2022 in system accreditation as well.

The collaboration between the volunteer members of the Accreditation Council and the full-time secretariat supporting them proved essential in handling the number of applications—which was nearly double that of 2019 in program accreditation alone.

1.4 Accreditation Applications in ELIAS

The Electronic Information and Application Processing System (ELIAS), which has been in operation since January 2019, continues to ensure, as a digital application platform, that the application submission and review process is efficient and reliable.

ELIAS supports the entire application process: from submission by the university/other institutions through processing

¹ See here and for the following remarks: AR Interim Report 2020 (AR 36/2020), available at: <https://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/index.php/de/me->

[dia/103](#). The key findings and their classification in the following paragraph are taken (in abbreviated form) from the summary *ibid.*, p. 1ff.

processing by the Accreditation Council's office and the preparation of the Accreditation Council's meetings, through to the accreditation decision and its announcement.

As of January 2021, 524 applicant organizations (including ten agencies) were registered with an account in ELIAS. Compared to the end of 2019, this represents nearly a doubling—the new application processing system and database are being adopted and used by universities.

ELIAS is available to the public at <https://antrag.akkreditierungsrat.de/>.

To enter accreditations under the old law, the agencies (for program accreditations) and system-accredited higher education institutions (for internal accreditations) have the option of using the corresponding application types so that these are published in the new database. (See also [Chapter 4.2](#))

The activities to complete and correct existing accreditation information, which serve to improve data quality, are carried out in constructive collaboration with higher education institutions and agencies.

In 2019, the groundwork was laid for the “Database 2021” were laid, whereby information on teacher training and combined degree programs—and later on all degree programs—will be corrected and supplemented in the new database. By January 2021, approximately 150 universities had already received an Excel file along with the guidelines for correcting program data. Sixty corrected Excel tables were returned to the office by the universities.

1.5 Pandemic-related adjustments

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, numerous emergency decisions have been and are being made at universities that also affect degree programs

. The Executive Board of the Accreditation Council Foundation therefore decided on March 27, 2020, to suspend the obligation to report significant changes pursuant to Section 28 of the Model Ordinance (state ordinances accordingly) for such measures until further notice, subject to specific regulations of individual states.

In consultation with the agency representatives on the Accreditation Council, this also applies to the analogous provision “under the old law” in Section 3.6.3 of the “Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programs” and to system accreditation.

Furthermore, on March 10, 2020, the Board of the Accreditation Council Foundation decided to allow extraordinary deadline extensions for pandemic-related delays in the program and system accreditation process. These may be requested for program and system accreditations that expire by September 30, 2021. This does not extend the accreditation period, i.e., the granted extension will be applied to the following accreditation period.

Pursuant to the resolution of September 29, 2020, such an extension request must be submitted no later than three months before the expiration of the accreditation period. This ensures that the request can be processed before the accreditation period expires.

To extend the accreditation of degree programs, a new application type “Extraordinary Extension” has been created in ELIAS, which is used for these cases.

2. Activities of the Accreditation Council in 2020: Tasks and Results

2.1 (Re-)accreditation of degree programs and quality assurance systems, as well as applications for alternative procedures

In 2020, 435 applications for (re)accreditation of degree programs were submitted, i.e., nearly twice as many as in 2019 (222). In 2020, the Accreditation Council reviewed a total of 418 program accreditation applications for the first time in a single session, which, due to bundling, covered 808 degree programs.² This, too, represents roughly a doubling compared to 2019.

In a number of cases, the Accreditation Council deviated from the proposal of the agency or the review panel. In these instances, the institution was given the opportunity to comment before the final decision was made.

In 2020, six system accreditations—four of which were initial accreditations—were submitted to ELIAS under the new legislation and approved.

In the alternative procedures—the third category of procedures alongside program and system accreditation—the Accreditation Council reviewed two applications. At the 104th meeting, the procedure for Harz University of Applied Sciences was initiated, and at the 105th meeting, the joint procedure for three universities in Baden-Württemberg was launched.

In addition to the technical support provided by ELIAS, the standardized report structure (and—

quality) is a fundamental prerequisite for the efficient processing of applications. To ensure that the accreditation reports from (currently) ten accreditation agencies can be processed efficiently by the Accreditation Council, the reports must be structurally comparable and follow a uniform format across all agencies. The comparability and readability of the accreditation reports are ensured by the standardized structure of the report templates. Currently, four **report templates** and, in program accreditation, an additional **Excel spreadsheet** (with **explanations**) for data collection serve as the basis for the accreditation reports and are also used for the self-reports.

The report templates were revised in 2020. The Accreditation Council approved the revised templates at its 103rd meeting. The agencies were informed of the changes on March 18, 2020 (**letter to agencies**).

The Accreditation Council and the agencies are in constant communication regarding report quality, including at the joint meeting at the beginning of 2020.

2.2 Requests for deadline extensions and bundled approvals

The Accreditation Council received numerous requests for deadline extensions and bundled approvals in the course of 2020, which—in the latter case—were generally decided upon with the involvement of members with relevant expertise.

The option for an extraordinary extension of deadlines due to the pandemic, introduced in mid-March 2020, was applied to approximately 500 of the applications

and reaccreditation applications were deferred in favor of initial accreditations due to the administrative office's heavy workload.

² The discrepancies in the application figures are due, among other things, to the fact that applications were received after the last meeting, applications submitted but not yet ready for a decision were not presented at a meeting, and applications from 2019

expiring in 2020, thus representing by far the largest share of extensions. Nearly one-third of the applications expected for 2020 have thus been postponed to 2021.

Regular applications for deadline extensions and bundled approvals have been fully processed in ELIAS since 2020; notifications are also generated and sent within the system. Applications for extraordinary deadline extensions, which were temporarily introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, can be created in the system, but the notifications are sent outside the system.

2.3 Accreditation of agencies

Under the new legal framework, the Accreditation Council authorizes accreditation agencies operating in Germany to carry out their activities, namely the conduct of accreditation procedures. The basis for the formal authorization procedure is an agency's listing in the EQAR (*European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*). According to the State Treaty, the prerequisite for the agency's authorization is proof that it is reliably capable of performing the tasks of evaluation and preparing the evaluation report; for agencies listed in the EQAR, this is presumed to be the case unless proven otherwise. In 2018, the Accreditation Council approved all—currently ten—agencies registered in the EQAR as of December 31, 2017, to conduct procedures under the new law. In 2020, the Accreditation Council authorized the agencies AQ Austria, evalag, and AHPGS to operate in Germany based on their renewed registration in the EQAR.

2.4 Decisions of the Accreditation Council

During the reporting period, the Accreditation Council made the following fundamental decisions:

► COVID-19 pandemic

On March 10, 2020, the Executive Board decided to introduce extraordinary deadline extensions due to pandemic-related delays. The decision initially applied to degree programs expiring by September 30, 2020, but was extended on April 17, 2020, until September 30, 2021. At its 105th meeting on September 29, 2020, the Accreditation Council decided not to extend the validity period further and to introduce a submission deadline of no later than three months before the expiration of the accreditation period. (► [Resolution of September 29, 2020, and Executive Board resolution of March 10, 2020](#))

► Guidelines for Quality Reports of System-Accredited Universities

(Partially) system-accredited higher education institutions are required under Section 29 of the MRVO to publish accreditation decisions and reports on their internal procedures. In its resolution "Reporting Requirements for System-Accredited Higher Education Institutions" of September 24, 2018, the Accreditation Council had already clarified this: The evaluation results of the internal procedures must be documented in so-called quality reports.

At its 105th meeting on September 29, 2020, the Accreditation Council adopted guidelines for the preparation of these quality reports. According to these guidelines, quality reports must document the evaluation of degree programs, including input from external stakeholders and taking into account any dissenting opinions. Furthermore, they must include an overview of any measures taken, a brief description of the process for awarding the seal, as well as brief profiles and summary evaluations of the degree programs. There is no obligation to use the templates. For implementation,

, universities were granted a transition period, which was extended by six months due to the pandemic. As of March 31, 2021, internally accredited degree programs may only be entered into the Accreditation Council's database in conjunction with a quality report. (► [Resolution of September 29, 2020](#))

2.5 Review of the accreditation procedures

Since 2018, the review of accreditation procedures ("monitoring") has no longer been part of the Accreditation Council's responsibilities. However, until decisions on accreditation procedures under the new law are available, the Accreditation Council may continue to initiate ad hoc review procedures for procedures under the old law if there are indications of improper conduct of a procedure or an erroneous accreditation decision.

During the reporting period, there were two ongoing proceedings and no new ones. Furthermore, one proceeding was concluded.

2.6 Events

ELIAS Training Sessions

On March 5 (Berlin) and May 13–14 (via Zoom video conference), training workshops on ELIAS were held for university staff responsible for maintaining program data and submitting applications for program accreditation. The response from the universities was very positive; both workshops were fully booked.

On August 20, 2020, an ELIAS training session for rapporteurs (via Zoom video conference) was also held. Follow-up sessions are planned.

Award for Quality Development

In 2020, the "Award for Quality Development," established by a resolution from the 102nd meeting of the Accreditation Council on November 21–22, 2019, was presented for the first time.

During its 103rd meeting in Potsdam, the Accreditation Council awarded the "Quality Development Award" to Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences at a festive evening event on March 3, 2020, in recognition of its application for reaccreditation of the "Biomedical Technology (B.Eng)" program. Particular emphasis was placed on student-centered teaching and learning, the mandatory practical /semester abroad, the exam period during the semester, and the program's faculty exchange rounds.

The decision on the award was made by a six-member jury, whose members were selected by representatives of the universities, international members, student representatives, and members of the Accreditation Council's Professional Practice Group. (► [Quality Award 2020](#))

2.7 Working Groups

► Curriculum Working Group

The 2nd meeting of the AG Raster took place on February 4, 2020. At its 103rd meeting, the Accreditation Council approved the revised frameworks (see [Chapter 2.1](#)).

► Advisory Committee

The Monitoring Committee met in Bonn on January 30, 2020, for its second meeting to discuss the topics delegated to it: "External examination in Baden-Württemberg in the accreditation process," "Handling of data on success rates," and "Documentation of Monitoring Committee papers." In addition,

the Monitoring Committee revisited the topic “Conditions/Notes” to reflect on the experiences from the previous meeting of the Accreditation Council.

The Monitoring Committee met virtually on April 28, 2020, for its third meeting to discuss the topics “Recognition of professionally acquired competencies,” “Franchise degree programs,” and consideration of gender equality in accreditation.

The Monitoring Committee held its fourth meeting virtually on June 4, 2020, to 104th meeting of the Accreditation Council.

The Monitoring Committee met virtually on November 19, 2020, for its 5th meeting to discuss the topics “The Significance of Qualification Objectives in Accreditation: Considerations on Assessment Criteria for Section 11(1) and (2) of the MRVO” and “Lump-Sum Credit Transfer.” (Members of the Monitoring Committee, [see Appendix 1](#))

3. International cooperation, quality

assurance, and quality development are essential prerequisites for the realization of the European Higher Education Area. Therefore, the promotion of international cooperation remains one of the central tasks assigned to the Accreditation Council by the states

. At its core, international cooperation must aim to promote mutual understanding of quality assurance systems, develop comparable criteria, methods, and standards for quality assurance, and improve the transparency of study programs in order to

to facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications and, thereby, student mobility.

In this context, the relevant European and international quality assurance networks play a prominent role.

► Networks, Conferences, and Discussions

The Accreditation Council has been a member since 2005 and *an affiliate* since 2018 of the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA). It is also a member of the *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education* (INQAAHE) and the *CHEA International Quality Group* (CIQG).

Together with the DAAD, it is represented in the “Implementation” working group of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and regularly participates in international working groups, meetings, and conferences. In 2020, these included, among others,

- the ENQA General Assembly on April 29, 2020 (online),
- the ENQA General Assembly on October 22, 2020 (online).

The Accreditation Council was unable to participate in the 2020 annual meeting of the *Quality Audit Network*. These network meetings serve as a forum for regular exchange among European quality assurance agencies whose procedures focus on various aspects of internal quality management at higher education institutions.

The Memorandum of Understanding with the Japanese quality assurance agency NIAD-QE, initially signed in October 2015 for a term of five years, has been extended for another five years. NIAD-QE maintains such agreements

with a number of quality assurance agencies worldwide. Occasionally (approximately every two to three years), the Secretariat hosts visitors from NIAD-QE in Japan who are conducting study tours in Europe.

At the request of the BMBF, the Accreditation Council is participating in the MICROBOL project. The project supports ministries and stakeholders in examining whether and how existing Bologna instruments can be applied to *microcredentials*. The two-year project is co-funded by Erasmus+ KA3.

International cooperation enables the Accreditation Council to share its expertise while also learning from the experiences of its foreign partners.

► Membership in ENQA

From 2005 to 2018, the Accreditation Council was a full member of the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA); its membership was last renewed in 2013 for a five-year term. In September 2018, the status was changed to “affiliate” because the Foundation was unable to submit the application for renewal of full membership in time due to the restructuring of the new system, which coincided with this process.

The Accreditation Council is seeking to regain full membership in ENQA as well as listing in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). The evaluation contract was signed on December 9, 2020, and the on-site visit is scheduled for late 2021.

► European Database Project DEQAR

To map all quality assurance results of the agencies listed in the European Register (EQAR) on a single platform

, EQAR has established the European database DEQAR (*Database of External Quality Assurance Results*). The goal is to provide the general public with open access to the quality assurance results of degree programs and institutions that are evaluated according to the ESG within the European Higher Education Area.

Since 2019, the accreditation results for degree programs recorded in ELIAS have been manually exported to DEQAR as CSV files. The results can be found [in DEQAR's public database](#).

An interface between the two databases to automate data transfer was planned in 2020 and is scheduled to be implemented in 2021.

► EU Twinning Project “Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications”

A two-year EU Twinning Project was launched in July 2019, focusing on the institutional and human resources development of the Georgian National Accreditation Agency (NCEQE). Project partners are Germany (the DAAD, BMBF, and the Accreditation Council are involved in the project on behalf of Germany) and Estonia (the Estonian Accreditation Agency EKKA).

Following 2019, the Accreditation Council also provided an expert for one of the missions in 2020, specifically: manuals and toolkits for accreditation.

4. Information and Communication

In 2019, the Accreditation Council sought advice on its public image and, together with the agency TRIO MedienSer-

service. Some of the measures outlined in the plan were already implemented in 2019, with others following in 2020.

4.1 Presentation, Information, and Counseling

The Accreditation Council regularly provides information about its decisions and all other topics related to the accreditation system. The Accreditation Council makes accreditation data available in its new [database of accredited degree programs](#) (see [Chapter 4.2](#)).

In addition to using the Information Service Science (idw) to publish [press releases](#), the [Foundation's website](#) serves as an important tool for disseminating information to the federal states, higher education institutions, students, and agencies. A new, technically revamped website has been online since September 2019.

Furthermore, the website includes, among other things, an overview of all published [decisions of the Accreditation Council](#). The decisions, as well as the relevant legal bases and [instructions for submitting applications](#) under the new law, are available to users of the website. In addition, the site provides information on the German accreditation system, the members of the Foundation's bodies and committees, and the agencies approved by the Accreditation Council.

Information on the accreditation system under the old legal framework can still be found at archiv.akkreditierungsrat.de.

The [FAQ \(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#) section, available since spring 2018, is being continuously expanded. It contains answers to frequently asked questions arising from the use of ELIAS as well as from the interpretation of the

State Treaty on Study Program Accreditation (StAkkStV) and the Model Statutory Ordinance (MRVO).

Since October 2019, the Accreditation Council has been sharing current events and developments on its Twitter channel ([@StiftungAR](#)). To this end, staff members at the executive office received training in a Twitter workshop.

The Accreditation Council Foundation has produced two videos: a promotional video and an "explanatory video" with tips for writing a good accreditation report, both of which have been available since early 2020 under the ["Video Contributions" section of the Accreditation Council Foundation's website](#).

As needed, agencies and system-accredited universities are informed via electronically sent [notifications](#), for example, regarding the electronic information and application processing system ELIAS.

The newsletter was revised in 2020 and has been published in its new format since April 16, 2020.

4.2 Publication of Accreditation Data

Since 2018, the Accreditation Council has ^{been} ^{responsible} for the publication of accreditation data in accordance with the Model Statutory Ordinance and the State Treaty³. The Accreditation Council's own database has been online since January 8, 2019. (see [Chapter 1.4](#))

► **Degree** Programs: Degree programs bearing the Accreditation Council's seal have been published in ELIAS since the beginning of 2019. This includes information on accreditation deadlines, the conditions associated with accreditation, the participating reviewers—

³ See Art. 3(6) of the State Agreement on the Protection of Personal Data (StAkkStV) and § 18(4), sentence 2 and § 29 MRVO.

and the evaluation they conducted, as well as the decision of the Accreditation Council.

► **System-accredited institutions of higher education:** Accredited degree programs from system-accredited institutions of higher education can also be found in the new ELIAS database. System-accredited institutions of higher education may enter data into the database themselves, which is then (following a formal review) activated by the Accreditation Council's office.

To standardize the entries for system-accredited higher education institutions in the database, there are (new) required fields. For example, system-accredited higher education institutions are not required to prepare their accreditation reports based on the evaluation grids of the Accreditation Council, a measure intended to account for the diversity of quality assurance systems. (See the "Reporting Requirements for System-Accredited Higher Education Institutions," ► [Resolution of 2018](#).) Section 29 of the MRVO stipulates that reports from system-accredited higher education institutions must be published. In 2019, the Accreditation Council "formulated guidelines for quality reports at system-accredited universities" (► [Resolution of September 17, 2019](#), supplemented by ► [Resolution of September 29, 2020](#), see [Chapter 2.4](#)). The key elements for the reports specified therein are evidence, plausibility, and transparency. As of March 31, 2021, internally accredited degree programs may only be entered into the Accreditation Council's database in conjunction with a quality report.

► **Agencies:** All agencies authorized to conduct accreditation procedures following successful approval by the Accreditation Council are listed on the [Accreditation Council's website](#).

4.3 Communication with the agencies

Under the new legal framework, constructive and cooperative collaboration between the Accreditation Council and the agencies is more than ever a fundamental prerequisite for an effective accreditation system in Germany.

The participation of the agencies in the Accreditation Council's working groups and the advisory membership of a representative of the agencies on the Accreditation Council have proven to be effective tools for reliable mutual information exchange among stakeholders.

The annual (and regular) exchange with representatives of the agencies took place at the 103rd meeting of the Accreditation Council on March 3–4, 2020. There was agreement that the accreditation system, reformed in early 2018, had proven its effectiveness. The Accreditation Council and the agencies worked well together. This was true despite the fact that both sides still had outstanding requests of one another.

To date, the Accreditation Council has informed the agencies of new or amended resolutions in the form of letters from the Chair. The agencies are notified of changes to the FAQs—some of which directly affect them—via the Twitter news service (see [Chapter 4.1](#)).

Throughout the rest of the year, it proved effective for the chairperson or individual staff members of the secretariat to be invited to agency meetings from time to time to discuss specific issues related to the new legal framework. On several occasions, these discussions served to gather the agencies' experiences—including

regarding the Accreditation Council's new database, or to discuss the structure of the accreditation reports and how the agencies handle them. To this end, several bilateral discussions with individual agencies took place in 2020.

4.4 Statistical Data

In January 2021, 6,639 bachelor's and 6,405 master's programs offered by state or state-recognized higher education institutions in Germany bore the Accreditation Council's quality seal.

These figures are based on the data in the Accreditation Council's database.

In accordance with the requirements of the new legal framework, the accreditation results

- in program and system accreditation by the Accreditation Council will be published in the database after a decision has been made,
- and the degree programs to which a (partially) system-accredited institution has awarded the Accreditation Council's seal are entered into the database by the (partially) system-accredited institutions,
- The degree programs whose accreditation procedures were conducted under the old law have been entered into the database by the agencies.

A total of 99 state or state-recognized institutions of higher education had successfully completed a (partial) system accreditation process at that time; this corresponds to approximately 20% of all institutions of higher education.⁴ Some institutions are in the process of obtaining system accreditation; the exact number is listed in

Accreditation Council, as the reporting requirement was eliminated under the new law. Six higher education institutions submitted an application for system accreditation under the new law to the Accreditation Council in 2020 (see [Chapter 2.1](#)).

5. Resources

5.1 Finances

The Accreditation Council is jointly funded by the 16 states in accordance with Section 4(1) of the Act on the Accreditation Council Foundation (Accreditation Act). Pursuant to Section 4(4), the Foundation may impose fees to cover its administrative expenses in accordance with the provisions of the fee schedule; which it did in the [Schedule of Fees](#) issued on July 11, 2018. It provides for an annual base fee (base flat rate) for higher education institutions, graded according to institution size, and procedure-related fees (case-based flat rates) for each accreditation decision. The basic fee is payable by every institution of higher education that offers at least one currently accredited degree program (including bachelor's programs at vocational academies). The amount of the basic flat rate and all other fees can be found in the "Fee Schedule" appendix to the [Schedule of Fees](#).

For the 2020 fiscal year, the Conference of Finance Ministers (FMK) had initially set the annual contributions from the states to the Accreditation Council at 565,000 euros.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous accreditation applications were postponed. Since

⁴ Of the 512 institutions documented in ELIAS. These include vocational academies, universities of applied sciences (HAWs), art and music colleges, music academies, and police academies;

universities, administrative colleges, and institutions of higher education of a special type.

the foundation's budget relies heavily on fee revenue, a financial shortfall loomed. This was countered by an increase in the state subsidy of 144,700 euros.

The foundation's annual financial statement for 2020 shows revenues totaling 1,475,318.50 euros (allocations from the states, fee revenues, and third-party revenues) and total expenditures of 1,475,229.30 euros. This leaves a surplus of 89.20 euros.

5.2 Staffing, facilities, and equipment of the office

According to the staffing plan, the Foundation's administrative office is staffed by an Executive Director (1.0 full-time equivalent [FTE]), program officers (8.0 FTE), and administrative assistants (1.75 FTE), as well as a secretary (1.0 FTE). In addition, the Foundation employed a student assistant until March 2020 and, since December 2019, a research assistant, each working 20 hours per month. Employees are compensated in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Public Service of the Federal States (TV-L). The administrative officer selected in the recruitment process in mid-2020 began her duties on October 1, 2020.

With its office at Adenauerallee 73 in Bonn, the Accreditation Council has 12 rented office spaces, spread across three floors since January 2019, with a total of 17 workstations and a meeting room covering a total area of approximately 360 square meters.

(In-person) meetings of the Council and its working groups frequently take place in rooms provided by its members and their institutions. In 2020,

For the reasons we all know, this played a less significant practical role than usual; the AG Raster meeting in early February 2020 took place at the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) in Berlin. The Foundation extends its thanks to the BDA and to everyone who is willing to host one of our events.

Members of the Governing Bodies and Committees

The bodies and committees are always supported and assisted by staff members from the Secretariat, with the number of staff varying as needed.

► Members of the Accreditation Council

Chair (since February 20, 2018)

Professor Dr. Reinhold R. **Grimm**

Vice Chair (since February 20, 2018)

Professor Dr. Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen

University Faculty Members

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Hans-Joachim **Bargstädt**, Bauhaus University Weimar Prof.

Dr.-Ing. Stefan **Bartels**, Lübeck University of Applied Sciences

Prof. Dr. Heike **Faßbender**, Technical University of Braunschweig Prof.

Dr. Reinhold **Grimm**

Prof. Dr. Petra **Gromann**, Fulda University of

Applied Sciences Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim **Roth**,

University of Cologne

Prof. Dr. Burkhard **Schmager**, Ernst Abbe University of Applied

Sciences Jena Prof. Dr. Martin **Ullrich**, Nuremberg University of

Music

Representative of the German Rectors' Conference

Professor Dr. Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen (until March 31, 2020)

State Representatives

Senior Ministerial Director Dr. Christine **Burtscheidt**, Hessian Ministry of Science and the Arts (since November 4, 2020)

Senior Ministerial Advisor Daniel **Köfer**, Hessian Ministry of Science and the Arts (until November 3, 2020)

Dr. Michael **Lehmann**, Ministry of Economics, Science, and Digitalization of Saxony-Anhalt

Senior Ministerial Director Ralf **Thönnissen**, Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia (until March 31, 2020)

Senior Ministerial Director Markus **Wiedemann**, Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of the State of Baden-Württemberg

Ltd. Dr. Hans-Peter **Zils**, Senior Ministerial Advisor, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (since April 1, 2020)

Representatives from the professional field

Dr. h.c. Josef **Beutelmann**, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Barmenia Versicherungen Rolf **Fischer**, Senate Director, Senate Administration for the Interior and Sport of the State of Berlin

Dr. Christina **Gommlich**, Senior Manager, Economic, Trade & Social Policy, Corporate Communications & Government Relations, BASF SE

Dr. Andreas **Keller**, Vice Chair of the Union for Education and Science (GEW)

Dr. Hans Jürgen **Urban**, Member of the Executive Board of IG Metall

Students

Daniel **Irmer**, Technical University of Freiberg Jasmin **Usainov**, TU Dresden

International Representatives

Prof. Dr. Tilmann **Märk**, University of Innsbruck

Prof. Dr. Martine **Rahier**, Rector of the University of Neuchâtel

Representatives of the agencies (in an advisory capacity)

Professor Dr. Reinhard **Zintl**, Otto Friedrich University of Bamberg (emeritus)

► Alternate members of the Accreditation Council

Alternate members of the group of university faculty

Prof. Dr. Christine **Bescherer**, Ludwigsburg University of Education

Prof. Dr. Peter **Buttner**, Munich University of Applied Sciences Prof. Dr.-Ing. Joaquin

Díaz, Technical University of Central Hesse

Prof. Dr. Birgit **Friedl**, Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel Prof.

Dr. Carmen **Leicht-Scholten**, RWTH Aachen

Prof. Dr. Oscar **Loureda Lamas**, University of Heidelberg Prof.

Dr. Oliver **Müller**, University of Applied Sciences

Kaiserslautern

Prof. Dr. Rolf **Sachsse**, Saar College of Fine Arts

Deputy for the Group of States

Dr. Jana **Blasius**, Senior Government Official, Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of the State of Baden-Württemberg (until March 31, 2020)

Senior Government Advisor Natascha **Lohöfer**, Hessian Ministry of Science and the Arts

Government Councilor Dr. Michael **Ficker**, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (until December 9, 2020)

Representative of the Professional Practice Group

Stefani **Sonntag**, Union for Education and Science (GEW) Timo **Gayer**, IG

Metall

► Permanent Guests on the Accreditation Council

Prof. Dr. Andreas **Musil**, University of Potsdam

Prof. Dr. Uwe **Schmidt**, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz Prof. Dr.

Marcelo **da Veiga**, Alanus University

► Members of the Foundation Board

Chair

State Councilor Dr. Eva **Gümbel**, Hamburg Ministry of Science and Research

Vice Chair

Dr. Jens-Peter **Gaul**, Secretary General of the German Rectors' Conference

State Representatives

State Secretary Susanne **Bowen**, Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

State Secretary Tobias **Dünow**, Ministry of Science, Research, and Culture of the State of Brandenburg (since February 13, 2020)

State Secretary Dr. Oliver **Grundei**, Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of Schleswig-Holstein State

Councilor Dr. Eva **Gümbel**, Hamburg Ministry of Science and Research

State Secretary Professor Dr. Ulrike **Gutheil**, Ministry of Science, Research, and Culture of the State of Brandenburg (until February 12, 2020)

Head of Office, Ministerial Director Dr. Rolf-Dieter **Jungk**, Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture, Science and the Arts

State Secretary Annette **Storsberg**, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

University representatives

Prof. Dr. Peter-André **Alt**, President of the German Rectors' Conference

Dr. Jens-Peter **Gaul**, Secretary General of the German Rectors'

Conference Professor Dr. Karim **Khakzar**, President of Fulda University of

Applied Sciences Professor Dr. Ulrich **Radtke**, Rector of the University of

Duisburg-Essen

Prof. Dr. Johanna Eleonore **Weber**, Rector of Ernst Moritz Arndt University of Greifswald

► Members of the Executive Board

Chair

Professor Dr. Reinhold R. **Grimm**

Members

Dr. Olaf **Bartz**, Executive Director of the Accreditation Council Foundation

Professor Dr. Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen

Professor Dr. Reinhold R. **Grimm**

► Appeals Commission

In 2019, the Accreditation Council appointed the members of the Appeals Commission: Prof.

Dr. Ute von **Lojewski**, Münster University of Applied Sciences (faculty member),

Liv Teresa **Muth**, Ghent University (student member), and

Dr. Anke **Rigbers**, evalag (agency representative) (alternate in case of conflict of interest: Prof. Dr. Kerstin Fink, FIBAA)

► Working Group on Teacher Education

Appointment initiated at the 106th meeting of the Accreditation Council on December 8–9, 2020.

► Working Group on Curricula

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Stefan **Bartels**, Lübeck University of Applied Sciences

Dr. Jana **Blasius**, Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of the State of Baden-Württemberg Prof. Dr.

Kerstin **Fink**, FIBAA (until March 31, 2020)

Prof. Dr. Reinhold **Grimm**

Prof. Dr. Petra **Gromann**, Fulda University of

Applied Sciences Dr. Siegfried **Hermes**, ASIIN

Daniel **Irmer**, Technical University Bergakademie Freiberg Dr.

Simone **Kroschel**, AQAS

Dr. Isabel **Rohner**, BDA

Prof. Dr. Tilmann **Märk**, University of Innsbruck

Barbara **Michalk**, HRK

Professor Dr. Martine **Rahier**, Rector of the University of Neuchâtel

Henning **Schäfer**, ZEvA

► Advisory Committee

Dr. Olaf **Bartz**, Accreditation Council

Prof. Dr. Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen

Dr. Michael **Ficker**, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (until May 5, 2020)

Timo **Gayer**, IG Metall Prof.

Dr. Reinhold **Grimm**

Prof. Dr. Petra **Gromann**, Fulda University of Applied Sciences

Daniel **Irmer**, Technical University of Freiberg (since March 18, 2020)

Prof. Dr. Carola **Jungwirth**, University of Passau

Prof. Dr. Tilmann **Märk**, University of Innsbruck

Barbara **Michalk**, HRK

Professor Dr. Martine **Rahier**, Rector of the University of Neuchâtel Franziska

Raudonat, TU Kaiserslautern (until March 17, 2020)

Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim **Roth**, University of Cologne

Henning **Schäfer**, ZEvA

State Councilor Dr. Michael **Ficker**, Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia

Nina **Ulbrich**, GEW

Dr. Iring **Wasser**, ASIIN

Meeting Dates

► Meetings of the Accreditation Council

- 103. Meeting on March 3–4, 2020, in Potsdam
- 104. Meeting on June 4, 2020, via Zoom video conference
- 105. Meeting on September 29, 2020 via Zoom video conference
- 106. Meeting on December 8–9, 2020 via Zoom video conference

► Meeting of the Foundation Board

- 24. Meeting on October 28, 2020, held as a video conference via Zoom

► Meeting of the Raster Working Group

Meeting on February 4, 2020, in Berlin

► Meeting of the Monitoring Committee

- 2. Meeting on January 30, 2020, in Bonn
- 3. Meeting on April 28, 2020 via Zoom video conference
- 4. Meeting on June 4, 2020 via Zoom video conference
- 5. Meeting on November 19, 2020 via Zoom video conference