

Stiftung zur Akkreditierung von Studiengängen in Deutschland

Akkreditierungsrat ■■

**Activity Report
2012**

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Activity Report 2012

Reporting period: January to December 2012

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For reasons of readability, gender-neutral language is not used throughout the text. In accordance with the principles of equal treatment, corresponding terms always refer to women and men.

Foreword

At the beginning of the year ended the current term of office of the Accreditation Council. New members have been named by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder and German Rectors' Conference. The constituting meeting for the upcoming period of office has as well taken place. The past four years are nevertheless worth reviewing.

The Accreditation Council always considered itself committed to the requirement of constant monitoring its rules, in order to ensure further development considering the experiences gained through the accreditation practice. With the comprehensive revision of Accreditation Rules for Study Programmes, internal Quality Assurance Systems, and Agencies in 2009, the Council increased the ability to effectively manage the resolutions and rationalize the accreditation process. It also used the revision to update the content of its criteria, and emphasised – considering the background of student protests in 2009 – that academic feasibility is an equally valued feature of quality in accreditation.

The Accreditation Council frequently discussed several topics. In connection with the increasing diversity and heterogeneity in the higher education area, the focus has been shifted to topics such as the variety of special study programme profiles and their respective accreditation requirements. Further examples of discussed issues refer to redesigning the accreditation of joint programmes, teacher training programmes, and planned academic programs. Besides the Accreditation Council further developed its own processes, taking into consideration the past experiences, which on the other side could effect/improve the accreditation process of newly appeared QA agen-

cies. Moreover, through the certification of two international agencies and the possibility of recognition of accreditation decisions for joint programmes, it has contributed to open the German Accreditation System towards the common European Higher Education Area.

Some of the most important accomplishment during past four years, however, is the consistent implementation of system accreditation, which contributed to strengthen autonomy of higher Education institutions. The Accreditation Council accompanied the process of introduction, and completed the very first evaluation at the end of the period in office 2009-2013. Based on above, system accreditation gained more flexibility, and optimisation with the help of permanent dialogue to all interest groups. Thus the main tasks for the upcoming period of office of Accreditation Council will be: to observe the impact of the newly restructured system and to accompany the next steps of Quality assurance in learning and teaching.

The recommendations provided by the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) and by the German Rectors' Conference, as well as the results of evaluations of the Foundation, should also be taken into consideration.

I would therefore like to express my gratitude to the partners of the Accreditation Council for their fruitful cooperation. I truly appreciate the work of the members of the Accreditation Council, which has shaped the Foundation for the period in office from 2009 to 2013.



Bonn, June 2013, Prof Reinhold R. Grimm

Overview**1st quarter 2012**

70th Meeting of the Accreditation Council on 23 February 2012 in Berlin

12th Meeting of the Foundation Board on 16 January 2012 in Berlin

Certification of the Agencies- AQAS and FIBAA for programme and system accreditation processes

Random sample assessments of agencies

Resolution of the Accreditation Council regarding the composition of expert groups in cluster accreditation processes

5th Meeting of the "Internal Quality Assurance" group on 5 March 2012 in Berlin

2nd quarter 2012

71st Meeting of the Accreditation Council on 28 June 2012 in Berlin

Round table discussion with agencies on 6 June 2012 in Berlin

Resolution of the Accreditation Council regarding exceptional approvals for joint programmes in system accreditation

Pilot scheme for further development of assessment procedures

Survey on Länder-specific structure guidelines for accreditation

Revision of " Internal QA system of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany"

3rd quarter 2012

72nd Meeting of the Accreditation Council on 12 September 2012 in Berlin

Joint Meeting of Accreditation Council and Foundation Board on 13 July 2012 in Berlin

Opening of the process for accreditation of AQ Austria

Feedback discussions one valuating system accreditation on 5 July 2012 in Berlin

Analysis of the evaluation of first experiences with system accreditation

Pilot scheme for further development of monitoring procedures

Revision and update of the Foundation website

4th quarter 2012

73rd Meeting of the Accreditation Council on 29 November 2012 in Berlin

Adoption of self-evaluation report for the external evaluation of the Foundation

Nomination of the academic subject working group

Random sample assessments of agencies

Round table discussion with agencies on 10 October 2012 in Berlin

Meeting of the working group -"Further development of system accreditation" on 15 November 2012

First joint session of Accreditation Council and Agencies on 27 November 2012

1. Evaluation of first experiences with system accreditation

The introduction of system accreditation in 2008 substantially increased the scope of QA. Based on that, the Accreditation Council decided to accompany the very first system accreditation processes. The first six applied examples showed the practical implication of the criteria and rules of procedures, which enabled the Council to identify the need for changes and reflect them respectively. In addition, the Accreditation Council was asked by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder to accompany the process of introducing system accreditation as a whole, and to present the report in 2012 on the experiences gained within the given time period about system accreditation.

In May 2012, the first six HEIs successfully carried out a process of system accreditation, and a range of further accreditation were still pending. The Accreditation Council was indeed able to begin the evaluation of gained knowledge and observations within the past five years.

► Evaluation procedures

For the sake of evaluation, the Accreditation Council had already agreed in 2008, with the certification of Agencies, to participate in the first two system accreditation processes of each Agency, to ensure direct exchange of information between Accreditation Council and Agencies. The Accreditation procedures were accompanied during the period of Summer 2009 to Spring 2012 mainly by members of the Accreditation Council or staff members from head office. They had to report the overall process of accreditation afterwards.

In order to be able to analyse practical findings of system accreditation process, the attendants provided reports each which, offered information about practical implication of rules and criteria for accreditation, covered feedback from the Agencies and QA professionals in that regard. Additionally, the head office of the Foundation carried out interviews with the reporters, and referred specific questions regarding the applicability of each element of accreditation procedures. Following evaluation of the reports and the interviews, the head office of the Foundation compiled a summarising progress report which served as a basis for discussion for feedback round-tables with the parties involved in the accreditation procedures. These feedback discussions between the reporters of the Accreditation Council and a selection of involved experts, HEI representatives, and responsible programme managers or managing directors of the Agencies took place on 5 July 2012 in Berlin, and were held in each case in separate rounds (see [Chapter 2.5](#)).

Considering the knowledge gained from the feedback discussions, the reporters then submitted a joint progress report to the Accreditation Council, in which they referred to points worthy of discussion, and also offered recommendations for the further development of individual process components.

The findings of both the reporters and the parties involved in the procedures were summarised by the Accreditation Council in its concluding "Report on the Evaluation of the First Experiences with System Accreditation". The Council then carried out a critical appreciation of the process and its organisation based on this report. In so doing, the Accreditation Council also considered further submitted feedbacks during the course of the preceding years. This applies above all to the recom-

recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities regarding "Accreditation as an Instrument of Quality Assurance" and the resolution of the German Rectors' Conference regarding "Further Development of the Accreditation System". Both of them were presented during the course of 2012 and were the subject of a joint consultation of the Accreditation Council and the Foundation Board (see [Chapter 2.5](#)).

The Accreditation Council approved the report on "Evaluation of the First Experiences with System Accreditation" at its 72nd Meeting on 12 September 2012. At the same time, it decided to publish the full report to satisfy the information requirement concerning system accreditation, and create a solid basis for discussion about its further development. The report is available in German and English on the website of the Accreditation Council (www.akkreditierungsrat.de)

► **Analyses, evaluations and perspectives**

Generally, the Accreditation Council has reached a positive assessment of the introductory phase of system accreditation within its analyses and evaluations. The assessments of the reporters of the Accreditation Council and the feedback from parties involved in the procedures show that the orientation, target-setting, and concept of the new quality assurance instrument have proven themselves in accreditation practice.

Indeed, the question regarding the direct effect of system accreditation on quality assurance and control processes at HEIs, and particularly, on the quality of learning and teaching, can only be answered in a rudimentary fashion at this point. However, the feedback from HEIs allows one to conclude that system accreditation

is achieving its intended effects, namely strengthening HEIs' own responsibility for quality in learning and teaching: all HEIs described the system accreditation as an instrument which promotes innovation, and has significantly improved HEI-internal discussion processes regarding quality assurance and development. Also acknowledged as a challenge, they attribute a high potential to the process for optimising HEI-internal processes of quality development.

The organisation of the process and its requirements with regards to content were also judged by the Accreditation Council to be overall positive. Thus, the criteria have proven themselves in the first processes of system accreditation, in the eyes of the Council. Likewise, the individual procedural elements are, in principle, suitable for helping to make evidence-based statements about the quality of HEI-internal quality assurance systems. The creative leeway, which the Accreditation Council had planned for both, content as well as the assessment procedure, proved to be of great use: this guarantees the necessary freedom for the design and implementation of the management and quality assurance mechanisms by the HEIs. On the other hand, it is possible for the expert groups to agree on the concrete local requirements, especially on the arrangement of site visits. The utilisation of such leeway was proved as necessary, though the first six system accreditation processes did show that the diversity of the HEIs led to correspondingly different quality assurance systems.

Nonetheless, the Accreditation Council also received suggestions for the further development of the procedure or its individual components, or recognised the need for subsequent management of selected aspects. Thus, the time of system accreditation and the necessary development status of the systems to be ac-

credited threw up questions. The random sample-like elements in the process, which were intended to help appraise the effectiveness of a system at a study programme level, were also discussed intensively. Relevant Potential was ascribed to empirically-impacted procedural components, whose effectiveness was optimised by stronger incorporation into the overall procedure, however. These and further ideas are documented extensively in the report of the Evaluation of the First Experiences with System Accreditation.

► Implementation of the findings

With the approval of the report, the Accreditation Council decided to use the knowledge gained from the five-year pilot phase to further develop system accreditation.

When preparing its advices, the Council established a working group, in which the interest groups, i.e. representatives of the HEIs, the Länder, professional practice, students and agencies, were introduced. Moreover, the round table discussion between Accreditation Council and Agencies on 10 October 2012 provided the opportunity to discuss possible measures for the optimisation of system accreditation (see [Chapter 4.3](#)). Thus, the working group was able to present to the Accreditation Council, at its 73rd Meeting on 29 November 2012, suggestions for the further development of system accreditation and the adjustment of its resolutions. The recommendations of the working group, which also made use of ideas from the German Council of Science and Humanities and the German Rectors' Conference, can in essence be summarised as follows:

- **Specification of prerequisites for admittance and the preliminary assessment:** The

prerequisites for admittance and the process of preliminary assessment are intended to ensure that only the HEIs which demonstrate required development level of internal quality assurance are allowed to start the process. The existing regulations did not universally achieve the intended effects in the first system accreditation procedures. Thus, processes were occasionally initiated without an assessable quality assurance system being in place. As a result, this led not only to significant delays in the process, but also affected the tension between consultation and certification, and limited the statement content, in particular in the context of the random sample elements. Therefore, HEIs should declare the functionality of their system on the basis of at least one study programme which has passed through the system to be accredited.

- **Flexibilisation of the process and further development of the random samples:** In the first six processes of system accreditation, it became clear that quality assurance systems directly reflect the differences of the HEIs with regards to profile, size, structure, traditions, and self-image. The development of quality assurance systems has also flourished differently. Valid findings about the effectiveness of the systems were then achieved when the appraisal systems were consistently carried out considering local concrete requirements. This observation also relates to the design of the random samples which are additionally intended to be more extensively integrated into the overall process. Already existing creative leeway should be emphasised more so accreditation processes and the key points of the appraisal can be better adjusted to match the individual HEI better. As a result of the flexibility opened up by the creative leeway, the requirements for the selection and preparation of experts should be made more precise. Moreo-

ver, the suggestions of the German Council of Science and Humanities regarding the development of a directory of all experts should be taken up to support the exchange of information and experience.

• **Measures for strengthening quality development:** The introduction of system accreditation represented a wide-reaching renewal in the accreditation system. The development, structure, and continuous use of formalised quality assurance and management systems poses a challenge for the HEIs. In the case of the continuous improvement of their quality assurance systems, HEIs should also be supported perspectively. Therefore, the components of system accreditation being further developed should be strengthened, amongst others, by recommendations and encouragement from the experts. Equally, the admittance of subunits to system accreditation should be designed less restrictively.

Furthermore, the working group presented the Accreditation Council various suggestions on the further improvement of the readability and intelligibility of the "Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation". In this context, the group also suggested the Accreditation Council about changes in its resolutions, which should be explained, for example, through a written opinion, so the HEI public could be informed in a transparent manner.

The Accreditation Council provided advice regarding the suggestions of the working group on the further development of system accreditation and the adjustment of resolutions at its 73rd Meeting on 29 November 2012 in a first reading.

Comment: the Accreditation Council resolved on the further development of system accreditation at its 74th Meeting on 20 February 2013 and essentially

followed the recommendations of the working group. The current version of the "Rules for Accreditation of Study Programmes and System Accreditation" as well as the "Opinion of the Accreditation Council regarding the Further Development of System Accreditation" are available on the website of the Accreditation Council (www.akkreditierungsrat.de).

2. Activities of the Accreditation Council in the year 2012: Tasks and results

2.1 Accreditation of Agencies

One of the central and frequent tasks of the Accreditation Council includes the accreditation and reaccreditation of accreditation agencies. Only Agencies certified by the Accreditation Council are entitled to accredit Bachelor's and Master's study programmes or internal quality assurance systems at HEIs, and to grant these with the quality seal of the Accreditation Council. The Certification of Accreditation Agencies is limited to a maximum of five years, and can also be issued under conditions which have to be fulfilled and later assessed by the Accreditation Council. For the Certification of an Agency, the Accreditation Council shall assign an independent expert group and, in the case of reaccreditation, also refer to experiences from the previous accreditation period. Approval is granted on the basis of criteria which ensure a high level of comparability, transparency, and reliability of the processes carried out by the admitted Agencies, and therefore represent an important prerequisite for the international recognition of accreditation decisions.

Last year, the Accreditation Council initiated the reaccreditation processes of AQAS and FIBAA. In 2012, the experts, called upon by

the Accreditation Council, presented their external review report. Based on these, the Accreditation Council decided, at its 70th Meeting on 23 February 2012, to recertify both Agencies for the processes of programme and system accreditation. Overall, ten Agencies are currently entitled to issue the quality seal of the Accreditation Council.

For the purposes of quality improvement, the accreditation of an Agency may be associated not only with the recommendations of the expert groups but also with conditions. As a follow-up to the accreditation, the assessment of fulfilling stated conditions, is one of the basic tasks of the Accreditation Council. The accreditation agency generally has nine months to fulfill the conditions. The Accreditation Council has ascertained the conditions in the accreditation processes of ACQUIN and ASIIN as fulfilled. conditions have also been partially fulfilled in the accreditation process of AQAS.

Furthermore, the Accreditation Council initiated the accreditation process for AQ Austria in 2012, and argued in this case for a shortened evaluation process. Considered was the fact that the recently founded Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Germany is to tie in with the activities of the AQA both formally and with regards to content. The AQA is entitled, up until the year 2014, to issue the quality seal of the Accreditation Council. For the shortening of the process, the Accreditation Council reached a decision after it was forced to exclude the option of transferring the AQA accreditation to the newly founded AQ Austria. A resolution in this process is planned for 2013.

Comprehensive information on the individual admittance decisions are available on the website of the Accreditation Council.

(www.akkreditierungsrat.de)

2.2 Assessment of the accreditation procedures

In addition to the regular accreditation of Agencies, one of the core tasks of the Accreditation Council is the assessment of programme accreditation procedures, carried out by the Agencies. This task is fulfilled by the Accreditation Council on the basis of a process which allows for both random sample-based as well as event-based assessments of accreditation decisions. Within the framework of the random sample-based assessment, four programme accreditation procedures each, and one system accreditation procedure are generally assessed per year and per Agency. The event-based assessment is used upon the presence of sufficient initial suspicion of inadequate execution and resolution of an accreditation process.

► Procedure of the assessment

The assessment of accreditation procedures is performed on the basis of files. For this, the head office of the Accreditation Council receives procedure documentations which, amongst others, includes the self-evaluation report of the HEI, information on the selection and appointment of the expert groups as well as on the execution of the site visit, the expert opinion, the opinion of the HEI, and the accreditation resolution of the Agency. In order to guarantee a secure information situation, the Agency has an opportunity to provide an extensive opinion in the course of the assessment process. If defects are found during the assessment, the management board of the Accreditation Council shall come to a decision on how to proceed further. Here, the spectrum of possible decisions ranges from a demand to amend the procedural practice of an Agency, to the obligation to amend a concrete accredi-

tation decision, and the imposition of an administrative fine or – in the case of enduring and serious breaches of the criteria and procedure rules of the Accreditation Council – to the withdrawal of the accreditation.

► Results of the assessment

In the reporting period, the Accreditation Council assessed a total of 28 procedures of accreditation of study programmes on a random sample basis, and handled four event-based assessment procedures. On multiple occasions, assessment procedures were concluded without defects. On various occasions, marginal defects were ascertained, though these had no effect on the outcome of the procedure. In individual assessment procedure, objections led to the subsequent issuing of a condition, or made a renewed appraisal of the study programme necessary, under consideration of individual criteria. In one case, the Accreditation Council required one Agency to withdraw a condition. The Agency presented a counter-claim to the decision from the assessment process, wherein a resolution of the Complaints Commission of the Foundation is stipulated.

Due to insufficient personnel capacities (vacant managing director position), an assessment of processes of system accreditation was not possible in the reporting period.

► Further development of assessment procedures

There are, in essence, two aims associated with the assessment of accreditation procedures by the Accreditation Council: On the one hand, they lead, in the case of significant incorrect decisions on the part of an Agency, to a revision of the accreditation resolution, and in

this sense represent an instrument of user protection; on the other hand, they are aimed at the avoidance of errors in future procedures, and therefore also at the perspective increase the quality of the procedures overall. For this purpose, the results of the assessment processes are evaluated comprehensively at regular intervals - though conversely on a cyclical basis in 2012 - and deliberated by the Accreditation Council.

The evaluation confirmed that the event-based assessment of accreditation procedures is an important instrument of the Accreditation Council for reacting to concrete complains or – if corresponding indications are present –, for being able to become active upon its own initiative. The random sample-based assessments have also contributed to significant improvements to the process routines of individual Agencies in the first few years since their introduction. Since then, however, the effect of the random samples on the concretely assessed individual processes has been increasingly limited. New knowledge regarding the working methods of the Agencies or the development potential of the execution of processes in programme accreditation, in particular, is hard to gain. In light of this, a pilot process was carried out in the reporting period which should allow a wider analysis of the processes carried out by the Agencies on the basis of individual criteria or select process rules. The results of this test run, which the working group "Internal Quality Assurance" of the Accreditation Council accompanied, was deliberated both in the Accreditation Council as well as with the Agencies (see also [Chapter 2.4](#)). These deliberations are not yet concluded.

2.3 Resolutions of the Accreditation Council

In addition to the accreditation of Agencies (see [Chapter 2.1](#)), the assessment of accreditation procedures (see [Chapter 2.2](#)) and the revision of the system of internal quality assurance (see [Chapter 2.4](#)), the Accreditation Council has approved a range of further resolutions and revised existing resolutions in the reporting period:

► Exceptional approvals for joint programmes in system accreditation

As a result of their study programme profile, the accreditation of joint programmes faces particular requirements. Conflicts can occur if national guidelines in the Länder of the involved HEIs contradict each other. This issue prompted the Accreditation Council at that time to plan for exceptional regulations for the accreditation of joint programmes. Thus, in case of contradictory demands, the Accreditation Council can release an Agency of its obligation to apply certain accreditation criteria if the quality standards are ensured, and the accreditation of a joint programme would otherwise be impossible. For system-accredited HEIs, the rules does not allow for a comparable option to date.

In order to meet the requirements for a regulation, the Accreditation Council, at its 71st Meeting on 28 June 2012, expanded the exceptional provisions for joint programmes to system accreditation. In case of contradictions between national guidelines, a system-accredited HEI can be released from its obligation to apply certain accreditation criteria. The decisions regarding such exceptional approval shall be made by the management board of the Foundation at the request of the HEI.

► Formation of expert groups in cluster accreditation procedures

By implementing so-called cluster accreditation, the Accreditation Council has created the possibility of increasing process efficiency in programme accreditation under certain requirements. Here, several academically similar study programmes can be accredited in a joint procedure. However, it is worth ensuring the sufficient appraisal of all study programmes, and also taking this into consideration accordingly when setting up an expert group. In order to counteract the under-representation of representatives from professional practice and representatives of students in the expert groups, the Accreditation Council, at its 70th Meeting on 23 February 2012, approved a regulation, according to which the restriction of one person either from professional practice or the student body must be well grounded for each procedure.

► Common and Specific Structural Guidelines of the Länder

Pursuant to section 2 para. 1, it is the task of the Accreditation Council to summarise common and specific structural guidelines as binding guidelines for accreditation.

The summary of the common guidelines of the Länder is, above all, performed by forwarding the corresponding resolutions to the Agencies. Only in those cases, in which there exists a clear need for clarification both on the side of the Agencies as well as the HEIs, the Accreditation Council shall refer illustratively to the application of individual guidelines. Since such interpretations or exemplary specifications always hide the risk of an implicit consolidation of rules, references of this type shall be formulated by the Accreditation Council with the ut-

most care and only in individual cases. In the reporting period, the illustration of creative leeway in the inspection and modularisation concepts of HEIs was necessary. The corresponding circular letter regarding the number of module inspections was preceded by extensive deliberation in the Accreditation Council, with the Agencies, and with the German Rectors' Conference.¹

In relation to the specific structural guidelines of the Länder, the head office has continuously carried out Länder surveys in recent years in order to inform Agencies and HEIs of the current status thereof. Such a survey was also carried out in the reporting period. The results were combined, at its 72nd Meeting on 12 September 2012, into binding guidelines for the accreditation of study programmes. Furthermore, the head office, at the request of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, evaluated all Higher Education Acts of the Länder and other regulations of the Länder to assess whether these contained further provisions which expanded on or deviated from the common structural guidelines of the Länder. The results of this evaluation were presented by the Accreditation Council following detailed consultation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder with the request to clarify how to handle deviating specific structural guidelines of Länder in the accreditation. For the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, the evaluation of the Accreditation Council was cause, in principle, to address the implementation of its reso-

lutions regarding the tiered graduation system and possible need for action.

Comment: As a result of their deliberations, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder reported to the Council at the beginning of 2013 that the disclosed circumstances did not provide cause for an amendment to its grounds for a resolution.

All resolutions of the Accreditation Council are available at: www.akkreditierungsrat.de

Appendix 2.3.1 Special rules for cluster accreditation (23 February 2012)

Appendix 2.3.2 Specific structural guidelines of the Länder in the sense of binding guidelines for accreditation (23 February 2012)

2.4 Internal quality assurance

In 2007, i.e. shortly after the establishment of the Foundation, the Accreditation Council set up a system of internal quality assurance which was meant to guarantee a high-quality and at the same time the most efficient fulfillment of the legal tasks possible through the continuous assessment and improvement of all internal processes. The focus of the quality assurance policy, which at the same time ensures the international recognition of the Foundation in its compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), is on the systematic and critical evaluation of one's own work by an independent working group, and with the help of regular feedback from relevant interest groups.

The Accreditation Council took the preparation for the external evaluation as an opportunity to assess and update the concept as well as the quality demands, quality measures, and feed-

¹ The interpretation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder regarding the definition of the standard period of study as well as the resolution thereof regarding amendments to the certified auditor exam regulation on credit transfer were furthermore disclosed.

back mechanisms formulated therein for their functionality and relevance. Under consideration of the experiences collected over the years, internal quality assurance could therefore be further systematised and specified. The Accreditation Council resolved the "System of Internal Quality Assurance of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany" at its 72nd Meeting on 12 September 2012.

The Accreditation Council determined the idea of a permanent working group, and in this way emphasised that internal quality assurance shall be continuously and sustainably carried out. Furthermore, the working group "Quality Assurance" also analysed the quality measures implemented by the Accreditation Council in 2012, and in particular assessed whether the quality claims for the individual service and support processes of the Foundation were honoured. In the reporting period, the attention of the working group was aimed primarily at the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of the process of evaluation and further development of system accreditation (see [Chapter 1](#)) as well as the particular relevance of system-related enquiries and cross-sectional assessments, which were prepared in 2012 not just for system accreditation, but also for applicable fees, assessment procedures, the quality of expert review reports, and above all in preparation for the external evaluation. Moreover, the working group dealt intensively with the results and experiences from the test run for the further development of the sample-based assessment (see [Chapter 2.2](#)). The assessment of the group on the advantages and disadvantages of the methods tested and the considerations inferred therefrom on alternative concepts for the assessment will be described by the working group in detail in its fourth quality report which shall be

presented to the Accreditation Council in the first half of 2013 before being published.

2.5 Events of the Accreditation Council

► **First joint conference of Accreditation Council and Agencies**

On 27 November 2012 a joint conference of Accreditation Council and Agencies was held for the first time in Bonn. within the scope of the conference around 250 associates of HEIs, ministries, and interest groups discussed the future of accreditation in Germany. In light of the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities and the suggestions of the German Rectors' Conference, they drafted a balance of the effects of accreditation in Germany, together with national and international experts, and discussed possible perspectives for the accreditation system, above all with regards to its significance for the European Higher Education Area. The active interest in the event, a wide-ranging discourse on and off the podium, and the results of a satisfaction survey completed by participants, document the popularity for this and possible future events. Together with the agencies, the Accreditation Council will deliberate on the continuation of such cooperation.

Appendix 2.5 Programme of the Conference "The Future of Accreditation in Germany" (23 September 2011)

► **Feedback discussions for evaluating system accreditation**

On 5 July 2012, the Accreditation Council invited representatives from HEIs, expert groups, and agencies to feedback discussions regarding system accreditation.

As a core component of the evaluation of the first six procedures, the survey of the "Pioneers of system accreditation" served above all to allow those involved in the processes to discuss strengths and weaknesses and to name possibilities for development, considering the various perspectives, in order to be able to profit from the experiences of others involved in the procedure to develop it further. The focus of the separate discussion sessions was primarily on the design of the accreditation procedures and its elements, as well as the criteria for system accreditation.

The feedback from these discussions was used by the Accreditation Council to assess and further develop the applicability, efficiency, and effectiveness of the procedure rules and criteria (see Chapter 1).

► **Joint Meeting of Accreditation Council and Foundation Board**

In May the German Council of Science and Humanities presented comprehensive recommendations on accreditation as an instrument of quality assurance. Last but not least, these recommendations also provided important impulses for the upcoming evaluation of the Accreditation Council. Those were taken by the Foundation and Accreditation Council as an opportunity to come together on 13 July 2012 at a joint meeting in Berlin. The members of both bodies were therefore offered the opportunity to express themselves both with regards to the basic evaluations of the German Council of Science and Humanities and its concrete suggestions for further development. The invitation was also accepted by a representative of the German Council of Science and Humanities who opened the event by explaining the central aspects and positions taken as a basis. In the context of this event, it became clear

that there are large crossover areas in the considerations of the German Council of Science and Humanities, Accreditation Council, and German Rectors' Conference. This is also why individual recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities were already seized on for the further development of system accreditation (see Chapter 1). The advice given for implementing the other recommendations, which relate also to programme accreditation and the accreditation system as such, has not yet been concluded.

2.6 Future tasks: an outlook

In 2013, a new four-year term of office will begin for the Accreditation Council. As one of its first acts of office, the constituted Accreditation Council will reach an agreement on the medium- and long-term direction of its work, and compile a new strategic plan. The aim will be to establish new impulses for the coming four years through reflection on what has already been achieved, and to continue what has proven itself. In light of this continuity and change, we can take a look at the upcoming tasks.

► **Consistent implementation of system accreditation:** In the coming year, the Accreditation Council will also be busy with the consistent implementation of system accreditation, and above all, with the implementation of the results of the evaluation. (see Chapter 1). Here, it is worth observing, on the one hand, whether the effects intended with the further development of system accreditation, namely the effectiveness and efficiency of the procedures, are increased. On the other hand, the report on the evaluation of the first experiences with system accreditation contains a range of

further observations and encouragements, for which the Accreditation Council has reserved further counselling. For example, this relates to possible measures for intensifying the exchange of experience and above all information between the Council and the system-accredited HEIs, as well as with the Agencies and all experts. The reconciliation between system and institutional accreditation by the German Council of Science and Humanities should also be deliberated. However, above all, the concrete designing of the quality assurance systems by the HEIs, and, in particular, their contained external elements is worth accompanying.

► **External evaluation of the Foundation and further feedback:** Almost at the same time, with the start of the new period in office of the Accreditation Council, the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany shall be externally evaluated on a rotational basis. The subject of the evaluation will be the fulfillment of the legal duties of the Foundation and adherence to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

In the previous year, the Accreditation Council entrusted ENQA with carrying out the procedure. The Accreditation Council also appointed a working group to prepare for the evaluation which was assigned to critically reflect on the fulfillment of the duties and conformity with international standards from an internal perspective. Another task was related with dealing the possible starting points for improvements in the principles and working approaches of the Foundation. The working group had four meetings in 2012 for internal self-evaluation. In addition, the opinions of all interest groups (HRK, Standing Conference of the Ministers of Edu-

cation and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, Länder, fzs, BDA, and DGB) as well as those of the agencies were collected and taken into account during their analyses and evaluations. As a result, the working group presented the Accreditation Council with a corresponding report, in which the assessments of the group with regards to the individual duties of the Foundation as well as the fulfilling of the ESG were summarised. This self-evaluation report on the external evaluation of the Foundation was approved by the Accreditation Council at its 73rd Meeting on 29 November 2012.

In the coming year an external expert group will evaluate the Foundation both on the basis of the self-evaluation report and their direct impression "on site", and will, for this purpose, be conducting conversations with the members of the bodies and committees of the Foundation, its head office, and further relevant groups. Their concluding expert review report will foreseeably be presented in the second half of 2013.

On the basis of the expert review report, the ENQA management board will come to a decision in the coming year regarding membership of the Foundation in the European network. However, the results of the review report are also of particular value for the Foundation itself. In this way, the knowledge and judgments contained in the evaluation can be used both with regards to fulfilling the legal duties, and in terms of conformity with the ESG, for improvements in the principles and working approaches of the Foundation, and can be taken into account in strategic planning for the coming period in office. In connection with this, the relationship between the results of the evaluation and the further recommendations and encouragements, which have been submitted to the Accreditation Council since 2012 (above all from the German Council of Science

and Humanities, HRK, Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder), can be created.

► **Expertise in accreditation:** As one of the results of the internal evaluation of the Foundation, the Accreditation Council, in its self-evaluation report, summarised several key accreditation topics and questions which will accompany the work of the Accreditation Council in the upcoming years. These topics include the recognition of foreign accreditation decisions, or working with creative leeway in accreditation, as well as the consideration of subject and content associated measures with regards within the accreditation procedures, amongst others. Here, the subject and content associated assessment from the perspective of the Accreditation Council represents a core component of the accreditation procedure. Accordingly, the academic qualification of graduates, their ability to take up qualified, gainful employment, as well as the acquisition of subject knowledge and competence are explicitly core components of the criteria, and therefore also the subject of the expert assessment in the accreditation procedure. The expert assessment itself is not performed on the basis of stipulated subject specific standards, however, but rather expertise and professionalism are incorporated through the proficiency of the experts. In this case, the standards of individual experts must also, of course, always refer here to the standards recognised by their respective academic or professional networks.

So far, the effect of these standards and their legitimisation in the accreditation system have not been explicitly discussed. In order to shed more light on the importance of expertise and professionalism in the accreditation procedure, as well as on the relationship between individ-

ual assessment procedures in the expert groups, in the standards recognised as applicable by each of the academic or professional communities, and to enter into a dialogue in this regard with the various interest groups, the Accreditation Council employed a working group at its 73rd Meeting on 29 November 2012 at the request of members from professional practice. The working group will endeavour to finance a corresponding project in the first step, in view of the strained budget situation of the Foundation.

3. International cooperation

With a view towards the realisation of the European Higher Education Area, the continuous promotion of international cooperation in the area of accreditation and quality assurance is one of the core duties transferred to the Accreditation Council by the Länder. Here, it is worth above all promoting the mutual understanding of the systems of quality assurance, developing comparable criteria, methods, and standards of quality assurance, and improving the transparency of teaching activities so as to ultimately facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications, and therefore student mobility.

In this respect, the appropriate European and international quality assurance networks, to which the Foundation belongs as an active member, play a singular role. Structurally, too, this is reflected by the international networking activities performed through the continuous representation of several international experts in the Accreditation Council and in the expert groups used by the Accreditation Council, and the admittance of international Agencies in Germany. At the meetings of the Council, the members of the Accreditation Council are

regularly informed about the current developments in accreditation and quality assurance in an international context.

The international network of the Accreditation Council is also reflected by the offer aimed at the Agencies and often taken advantage to also assess conformity with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* throughout the accreditation procedures. In this way, synergies are used in the assessment of the Agencies, and also the debate on international standards in the accreditation procedure is promoted. The results of the assessment regularly form the basis for decisions regarding the membership of the Agencies in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and for their acceptance into the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The cooperation of the Accreditation Council in the international context can be illustrated using the following overview of the activities of the Council and its members:

International networks: The Accreditation Council has been an active member of benchmark European and international networks for quality assurance such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) for many years. Within the framework of its possibilities, the Council regularly takes part in international working groups, meetings, and conferences, and is represented by members of the head office in the European Quality Assurance Forum, the European Audit Network, the ENQA working group "Internal Quality Assurance", and, since 2012, in the working group "Impact of

Quality Assurance". This international involvement and cooperation allows the Accreditation Council to bring its expertise to the international stage, and at the same time to learn from the experiences of foreign partners.

As ENQA President, the Managing Director of the Accreditation Council, Dr Achim Hopbach, active until June 2012, also made an important contribution to further investment in the relationships between the national and European level.

Tempus Project in Tunisia: As experts for external quality assurance, the Accreditation Council is involved in the international Tempus Project "QualityCert" for establishing a system of quality assurance and certification in Tunisian higher education. Together with the Technical University of Dresden (Technische Universität Dresden), seven universities from France, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Tunisia, as well as other project partners, the Accreditation Council will accompany the development of quality standards for learning and teaching, and train experts in quality assurance in the higher education area. In the reporting period, concepts for pilot processes for certification, including corresponding training measures, were developed under the auspices of the head office of the Foundation. A study visit by the Tunisian partners to the head office and to two accreditation agencies was also carried out.

International networking: The mutual understanding of quality assurance systems in an international context is promoted not just via the networks mentioned above, but also through the cooperation of members of the Accreditation Council in commissions, expert groups, or

quality assurance institutions abroad, as well as through contacts within the framework of conferences and workshops. For example, the chairman of the Accreditation Council is the Representative Chairman of the University Council of the University of Vienna (Universität Wien). The managing director of the Accreditation Council, active for the Foundation until June 2012, made quite a significant contribution to the international network activities of the Accreditation Council through his many different contacts and activities. In this respect, his activities not just as ENQA President, but also as a member of the *Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation*, as German representative in the Bologna Working Group of Qualification Frameworks, and as national correspondent for Qualification Frameworks, should be mentioned. He also supported the international representation of the Accreditation Council through intensive lecturing activities, and as a member of various expert groups at an international level, such as the ERASMUS Mundus Advisory Board, and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), or as an expert in the referencing of the Austrian Qualification Framework.

The head office of the Accreditation Council regularly welcomes foreign delegations, such as from China (29 March 2012), Japan (21 September 2012), Sweden (22 October 2012), and Tunisia (30 October 2012) during the reporting period.²

² A selection of further appointments were: EQF Advisory Group Austria, 11 January 2012 in Vienna; NQ.FL-HS Expert Committee, 2 May 2012 in Liechtenstein, NQF Network Meeting on 22 May 2012 in Brussels, ENQA-Working-Group on Internal Quality Assurance, 6-8 June 2012 Valladolid; Quality Audit Network, 14/15 June 2012 in Bucharest; ENQA General Assembly, 18-19 October 2012 in Basel; ENQA Working Group on Impact, 12/13 April 2012 in Barcelona, 27/28 September 12 in Brussels, 13/14 December 2012 in Oslo.

4. Information and communication

4.1 Presentation, information, and consultation

The higher education system, and therefore also the accreditation system, are shaped by a dynamic development process. Interest in relevant information is being satisfied by the Foundation through various communication measures and offers that include, in essence, electronic media, as well as contributions to conferences, events, and various national and international working groups.

In addition to publishing press releases via the Science Information Service (Informationsdienst Wissenschaft), the website of the Foundation (www.akkreditierungsrat.de) also represents an important instrument in the publication of accreditation data (see [Chapter 4.2](#)) and the preparation of information for the Länder, HEIs, Agencies, and interested members of the public. The website contains an overview of all resolutions of the Accreditation Council. The resolutions, as well as relevant documents of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder and HRK, are also available to the user of the Foundation's website as PDF files.

Moreover, the website contains information on the German accreditation system, the members of the bodies and committees of the Foundation, as well as the Agencies accredited by the Accreditation Council. In the reporting period, the content of the website was comprehensively revised and updated, though it has not been possible to update the English-language information because of the lack of capacity so far.

Apart from the information offered on the website, the Länder (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder) and also the HEIs (German Rectors' Conference) are kept informed about the results of the meetings of the Accreditation Council and the Foundation Board. In addition, the Foundation presents an Activity Report every year which provides information about the work results of the Foundation, as well as current developments in accreditation in a national and international context. The Activity Report is published as a PDF document and is available to the public in German and English. The head office of the Foundation also publishes quarterly a newsletter which provides information on the results of the Meetings of the Accreditation Council, new developments in the German accreditation system, personnel, and appointments, or events being planned. Moreover, the Agencies, and also the higher education public, are kept informed of the application of rules, criteria and structural guidelines on accreditation in the form of an event-based, electronically delivered circular letter (see [Chapter 2.3](#)). The events of the Accreditation Council and, in the reporting period especially the "The Future of Accreditation in Germany" conference held together with the Agencies, serve to exchange information (see [Chapter 2.5](#)).

The Accreditation Council is continuously consulted as a competent office in questions of accreditation and quality assurance, but also in questions of study reform and the Bologna process, and is represented at specialist conferences, seminars, and expert discussions etc. by its members and employees. Areas of constant representation here include such areas as the National Bologna working group, the working group for the drafting of the "German Qualification Framework for Life-Long Learning", the ERASMUS Mundus Advisory Board of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and various other networks and working groups of the employers, for example.

The countless discussions of the Foundation's management board with HEI representatives, faculty associations, unions, professional bodies, and church representatives have also proven to be a constructive way of discussing cooperation possibilities and further improving joint work. Equally important is the answering of a large number of telephone and written enquiries from students, HEIs, ministries, trade associations, employees, employers, and agencies on general matters of accreditation, the resolutions of the Accreditation Council, or current accreditation processes. The head office of the Foundation is generally open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and provides advice free of charge.

4.2 Publication of accreditation data

All Agencies which, after successful certification by the Accreditation Council, are entitled to issue the Council's quality seal and are listed on the website of the Accreditation Council www.akkreditierungsrat.de. In the interest of high transparency, the resolution regarding accreditation, including the conditions and deadlines associated with the accreditation, the external review reports, the self-evaluation reports, as well as the opinions of the Agencies, are also published. The information is regularly available in German and English.

Study programmes that display the seal of the Accreditation Council are published in the database of accredited study programmes. This database, linked with the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference, is available on the website of the Accreditation Council, and offers information on accreditation deadlines, the conditions associated with accreditation where applicable, the experts involved, and the evaluation carried out by the experts.

In addition to accreditation data related to study programmes, the website of the Accreditation Council also has statistics on accredited study programmes which provide information on the number of currently accredited study programmes, and categorises these by duration of study, qualification designation, subject groups, HEI type, Länder, and standard periods of study (see Chapter 4.4). The accreditation data are added to the database and updated by the certified Agencies. The release of data sets is executed following inspection by the head office of the Accreditation Council.

All information is prepared in relation to study programmes both for the statistics as well as for the database. Therefore, in system accredi-

tation, those study programmes that have received the quality seal of the Accreditation Council through the accredited HEI are also published. In this way, individuals interested in studying, HEIs and employees, the Länder, and interested members of the public can quickly and comprehensively inform themselves of all accredited study opportunities. The database does not yet offer the possibility of informing oneself of system-accredited HEIs. However, a corresponding concept was drafted in the reporting period with regards to the identified need for information. In addition to information on the affected HEIs, it is also planned to publish conditions and review reports about system accreditation, as the Accreditation Council had already ruled in 2011. An equally important part of the discussion is the consistent mapping of individuals at HEIs entitled to perform self-accreditation, so that accredited study opportunities are no longer registered by the QA-Agencies, but by the HEIs themselves. Due to a lack of financial resources and manpower, implementation of the project was not possible in 2012 and it was suspended until further notice.

Together with the German Rectors' Conference, the Accreditation Council is also involved in the European database project *Grossroads*. With the participation of accreditation institutions in Austria (excl. state universities), Belgium (Flemish area), Denmark, France (study programmes in engineering), Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, the database, available at www.grossroads.eu, provides users with comprehensive information on the accredited study programmes as well as the HEI and accreditation system of the countries involved.

4.3 Communication with the Agencies

In carrying out its tasks, the Foundation takes the various perspectives of relevant interest groups into account. A trustful cooperation with the Agencies, as it is anchored in the Foundation Law (Stiftungsgesetz), is attributed particular relevance in this respect, and means both the inclusion of the Agencies in the work of the Foundation, and the regular and mutual exchange of information. The involvement of Agency representatives in the various working groups of the Accreditation Council, regular round table discussions of the Accreditation Council with the Agencies, and their membership in the Accreditation Council have proven to be reliable instruments. The member nominated by the Agencies, with an advisory vote, has the duty to represent the Agencies, and to inform these of the results of the deliberations following the Accreditation council meetings. Before approving resolutions with basic significance for the accreditation system and the accreditation procedures, the Accreditation Council consults with the Agencies. In this way, the experiences of the Agencies from accreditation practice can be taken into account as required without the regulatory sovereignty of the Accreditation Council being questioned as a result. The Agencies will be informed by the Accreditation Council, in a timely manner and in the form of a circular letter or e-mail, of new or amended resolutions of the Accreditation Council, as well as changes to the common or specific guidelines of the Länder.

In 2012, the members of the Accreditation Council and the Agencies came together at two round table discussions on 6 June 2012, and 10 October 2012 to talk, amongst other subjects, about the results of the Standing Conference of Ministers in Bucharest, the further development of the Bologna process, the experiences with system accreditation and se-

lected accreditation criteria, the further development of the assessment process, and possible measures for improving the quality of appraisals. Moreover, codes of conduct were created for amendments to the statutes of fees and the further development of system accreditation. The practical knowledge of the Agencies contributed significantly to success of organized discussions.

The involvement in accreditation procedures by the Accreditation Council outside of its assessment activities also regularly contributes to the exchange of information with the Agencies (see [Chapter 2.2](#)). Within the framework of sitting in on lectures, members of the Accreditation Commission or its head office participate in individual accreditation procedures from the application to the final resolution in the Accreditation Commission of Agency. This involvement in the procedures serve above all to give the GAC a direct glimpse into procedural practice, and to give the agencies feedback from an external perspective. In the reporting period, seven accreditation processes in programme and system accreditation were accompanied. These processes were of particularly significant for evaluation of initial experiences with the accreditation of HEIs' internal quality assurance systems (see [Chapter 1](#)). In the context of the cooperative partnership it is equally significant to mention the first joint conference with the Accreditation Council on 27 November 2012 in Bonn which could take place thanks to the achievement of the Agencies (see [Chapter 2.5](#)).

4.4 Statistical data

By the end of December 2012, 7,062 Bachelor's and Master's study programmes, which are offered by state or state-recognised HEIs in Germany, were granted with the quality seal of the Accreditation Council.³ The seal of the Accreditation Council was issued for the internal quality assurance system of an HEI a total of ten times (system accreditation). This corresponds to a share of approximately 2.5 per cent of all HEIs.⁴ The number of accredited study programmes has not changed compared to the previous year and adds up to around 50 per cent of all Bachelor's and Master's study programmes offered.

The webpage of the Accreditation Council offers information on the current figures:

www.akkreditierungsrat.de

5. Resources

5.1 Finances

The financing of the Accreditation Council is performed mutually by the 16 Länder, pursuant to section 4 para. 1 of the Accreditation Foundation Act (Akkreditierungs-Stiftungs-Gesetz). The Länder only guarantee financing to the extent that the administrative expenditure of the Accreditation Council is not covered by fees which are in principle levied for the accredita-

tion of Agencies (see Chapter 2.1) and for the assessment of accreditation processes (see Chapter 2.2).

For the financial years 2008 to 2012, the Standing Conference of Finance Ministers (Finanzministerkonferenz) ascertained annual contributions of the Länder to the Accreditation Council of €330,000. Since 2010, the Foundation has received an annual grant of €27,000 from the Länder as compensation for the additional personnel requirements resulting from the ENQA Presidency of the managing director of the Foundation. With the resignation of the previous managing director, the basis for this special grant is not applicable. With respect to upcoming tasks, in particular in connection with the external evaluation (see Chapter 2.6), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder has approved the Foundation's application to re-dedicate the special funds, and make these available through 2013.

Fee revenues for the Accreditation Council from the accreditation of Agencies, and the assessment of accreditation procedures remained at a maximum of €40,000 in the years 2008 to 2011. Additional receipts were paid over to the Länder. Upon the resolution of the Standing Conference of Finance Ministers, the fees for the Foundation shall henceforth, from 2012, remain at their full amount.

When calculating fees, the Foundation takes as a basis only administrative expenditure - i.e. the costs actually accrued. Thus far, the fee rates have been based on estimates. Therefore, an evaluation of the statutes of fees was carried out in 2011 and 2012 which also led to a moderate increase in the fee rates. The amendment to the fee rates was deliberated at the round table discussion with the Agencies on 10 October 2012, and by the Accreditation

³ The figures stated here are based on the master data of the Accreditation Council's database. The database lists all accredited study programmes or opportunities for study, provided these have been entered into the database by the Accreditation Agencies. It also includes study programmes which have received the seal of the Accreditation Council in the course of system accreditation. The number of system-accredited HEIs was calculated on an event basis.

⁴ At 394 HEIs according to the information in the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference www.hochschulkompass.de

Council at its 73rd Meeting on 29 November 2012. Upon resolution of the Foundation Board, and following approval by the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research of the Land of North-Rhine Westphalia, correspondingly amended statutes of fees will foreseeably come into effect in the second quarter of 2013.⁵

Overall, the accreditation system has grown significantly since the establishment of the Foundation in 2005. The number of accredited study programmes has increased almost five-fold, with the number of Agencies rising from six to ten. With system accreditation, a completely new instrument has been introduced, and the international complexities have become significantly greater. At the resolution of the Standing Conference of Finance Ministers on the maintaining of the fee revenues at the Foundation, it has been possible to more or less balance the fee and price growths since 2005, though an adjustment to the configuration of the head office to satisfy quantitatively and qualitatively increased duties has not yet occurred. Therefore, the deficits in carrying out the legally defined tasks is becoming even greater.

Comment: The bodies of the Foundation therefore presented at the beginning of 2013 a financial plan for the years 2014 to 2016 which takes account of the increased demands on personnel and resources.

The annual financial statement of the Foundation shows revenues of €436,137.25 for 2012, and total expenses of €433,442.48.⁶ There remains a residual amount of €2,694.77.

5.2 Configuration of personnel, space, and resources

Pursuant to the job chart, the personnel configuration of the Foundation's head office includes a managing director (100 per cent), three consultants (2.5 full-time equivalents), and an administrator (50 per cent); a temporary post is set up using third-party and special funds. The financing of this post for the reporting period was realised through the vacancy of the position of managing director in the second half of 2012. Since May 2012, the Foundation has also employed a temporary student employee for 20 hours per month. The employees – with the exception of the temporary employee – are all graduates of HEIs; remuneration is executed pursuant to the tariff stipulations of the pay contract for the public service employees of the Länder.

At the head office in Adenauerallee 73, Bonn, the Accreditation Council possesses four rented office rooms with a total area of approx 120 square metres.

The computers at the currently six workplaces are mainly from 2001 and 2006. The server also dates from 2006. The software used is comparably outdated. The financial situation in 2012 did not allow their renewal.

⁵ The statutes of fees were resolved by the Foundation Board on 1 March 2013 and came into effect on 19 April 2013.

⁶ Values adjusted by excess payments to be reimbursed to individual Länder.

Appendices

- Appendix 0.1 Members of the bodies and committees
- Appendix 0.2 Meeting appointments
- Appendix 2.3.1 Special rules for cluster accreditation
- Appendix 2.3.2 Specific structural guidelines for the Länder in the sense of binding guidelines for the accreditation of study programmes
- Appendix 2.5 Programme of the Conference "The Future of Accreditation in Germany"

Members of the bodies and committees

► Members of the Accreditation Council

Chairman

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**

Deputy Chairman

State Secretary Professor Thomas **Deufel**

HEI Representative

Professor Stefan **Bartels**, University of Applied Science, Lübeck (Fachhochschule Lübeck)

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**, formerly of Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Professor Ute von **Lojewski**, University of Applied Science, Münster (Fachhochschule Münster)

Professor Reinhard **Zintl**, formerly. Otto Friedrich University, Bamberg (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)

Länder representatives

State Secretary Professor Thomas **Deufel**, Thuringian Ministry for Education, Science, and Culture

State Secretary Helmut **Dockter**, Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research for North-Rhine Westphalia (from June 2012, successor to Ebling)

State Secretary Dr Michael **Ebling**, Ministry for Science, Further Education, Research, and Culture for Rhineland Palatinate (until May 2012)

State Secretary Dr Josef **Lange**, Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture

Ministerial Director Dr Adalbert **Weiß**, Bavarian Ministry of State for Science, Research, and Art

Representative of professional practice

Ernst **Baumann**, former member of the management board of BMW AG

Petra **Gerstenkorn**, member of the Federal Board of the United Services Union (Bundesvorstand von ver.di)

Dr Regina **Görner**, formerly of IG Metal management board

Under-secretary Günter **Hefner**, Hessian Ministry for Internal Affairs and Sport

Thomas **Sattelberger**, former member of management board of Deutsche Telekom AG

Students

Julian **Hiller**, University of Hanover (Universität Hannover)

Dominique **Last**, Technical University of Dresden (Technische Universität Dresden)

International representatives

Dr Sijbolt **Noorda**, former president of Association of Universities in the Netherlands (vereniging van universiteiten- VSNU)

Professor Andrea **Schenker-Wicki**, University of Zurich (Universität Zürich) (until June 2012)

n.n.

Representative of Agencies (with an advisory vote)

Professor Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen (Universität Siegen)

► Member of Foundation Board**Chairwoman**

State Secretary Dr Cordelia **Andreßen** (until October 2012)

n.n.

Deputy Chairman

Dr **Kathöfer**, General Secretary of German Rectors' Conference

Länder representatives

State Secretary Dr Cordelia **Andreßen**, Ministry for Science, Finance, and Transport for Schleswig-Holstein (until October 2012)

State Secretary Helmut **Dockter**, Ministry for Innovation, Science, and Research for North-Rhine Westphalia (until May 2012)

State Secretary Martin **Gorholt**, Ministry for Science, Research, and Culture for Brandenburg

State Secretary Dr Henry **Hasenpflug**, Ministry of State for Science and Art for Saxony (from October 2012, successor to Ms Andreßen)

State Secretary Ingmar **Jung**, Hessian Ministry for Science and Art

State Secretary Dr Knut **Nevermann**, Senate Administration for Education, Science, and Research Berlin

State Secretary Sebastian **Schröder**, Ministry for Education, Science, and Culture for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (from May 2012, successor to Mr Dockter)

State Secretary Marco **Tullner**, Ministry for Science and Finance for Saxony-Anhalt

HEI Representative

Professor Ursula **Gather**, Rector of the Technical University of Dortmund (TU Dortmund)

Professor Horst **Hippler**, President of German Rectors' Conference (from June 2012, successor to Ms Wintermantel)

Dr **Kathöfer**, General Secretary of the German Rectors' Conference

Professor Dieter **Lenzen**, President of the Free University of Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin)

Professor Micha **Teuscher**, Rector of the University of New Brandenburg (Hochschule Neubrandenburg)

Professor Margret **Wintermantel**, President of German Rectors' Conference (until June 2012)

► **Members of the management board**

Chairman

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**

Members

State Secretary Professor Thomas **Deufel**, Thuringian Ministry for Education, Science, and Culture

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**, formerly of Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Dr Achim **Hopbach**, Managing Director of Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (until June 2012)

n.n.

► **Members of further committees and working groups**

Below, alongside the permanent committees and working groups of the Accreditation Council, are listed only those working and expert groups which have concluded their work within the reporting period.

Complaints commission

Professor Dietmar von **Hoyningen-Hüne**, formerly of the University of Mannheim (Hochschule Mannheim)

Julian **Hiller**, Leibniz University of Hanover (Universität Hannover)

Professor Reinhard **Zintl**, Otto Friedrich University, Bamberg (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)

Working group for quality assurance

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**, formerly of Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Dr Regina **Görner**, formerly of IG Metal management board

Dominique **Last**, Technical University of Dresden (Technische Universität Dresden)

Working group for evaluation

Professor Reinhard **Zintl**, formerly of Otto Friedrich University, Bamberg (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)

Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary Barbara **Lüddeke**, Bavarian Ministry of State for Science, Research, and Art

Dr Sijbolt **Noorda**, former president of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (vereniging van universiteiten- VSNU)

Henning **Dettleff**, Confederation of German Employers (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände e.V.)

Moritz **Maikämper**, Brandenburg Technical University of Cottbus (Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus)

Working group on further development of system accreditation

Franz **Börsch**, Acting Managing Director of the Foundation

Professor Holger **Burckhart**, University of Siegen (Universität Siegen)

Professor Reinhold R. **Grimm**, formerly of Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Professor Stefan **Bartels**, University of Applied Science, Lübeck (Fachhochschule Lübeck)

Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary Barbara **Lüddeke**, Bavarian Ministry of State for Science, Research, and Art

Julian **Hiller**, Leibniz University of Hanover (Universität Hannover)

Doctor of Engineering Karl-Heinrich **Steinheimer**, United Services Union

Expert group in process of accreditation of AQAS

Christoph **Heumann**, University of Hamburg (Universität Hamburg), Quality and Law Department

Prof Peter **Pirsch**, Leibniz University of Hanover (Leibniz Universität Hannover), Institute for Micro-electronic Systems (Institut für Mikroelektronische Systeme)

Dr Kurt **Sohm**, Managing Director of FH Council (Fachhochschulrat), Austria

Rikke **Sørup**, The Danish Evaluation Institute, Deputy Director of Projects

Johannes M. **Wagner**, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Bremen (Universität Bremen)

Expert group in process of accreditation of FIBAA

Henning **Dettleff**, Consultant for HEI policy for the Confederation of German Employers (professional practice)

Dr Sabine **Felder**, Head of Bologna Coordination, Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities (Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten)

Prof h.c. Dietmar von **Hoyningen-Huene**, University of Mannheim (Hochschule Mannheim)

Moritz **Maikämper**, Student at Brandenburg Technical University of Cottbus (Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus)

Thierry **Malan**, Consultant in International Higher Education (formerly Inspecteur général de l'administration de l'éducation national et de la recherche, retired)

Meeting appointments

Meetings of the Accreditation Council in 2012

70th Meeting on 23 February 2012 in Berlin

71st Meeting on 28 June 2012 in Berlin

72nd Meeting on 12 September 2012 in Berlin

74th Meeting on 29 November 2012 in Berlin

Meetings of the Foundation Board in 2012

12th Meeting on 16 January 2012 in Berlin

13th Meeting on 13 July 2012 in Berlin (joint meeting with the Accreditation Council)

Special rules for cluster accreditation

(as resolution of the Accreditation Council on the rules for the accreditation of study programmes, and for system accreditation of 8 December 2009 in the version of 23 February 2012)

1.3.1 The cluster accreditation of study programmes requires the high affinity of subjects of the individual (partial) study programmes. This is only deemed present if the affinity goes beyond simply belonging to a subject culture (humanities, cultural sciences, social sciences, or natural sciences) and displays a disciplinary closeness with the (partial) study programmes.

Mutual structural characteristics of the (partial) study programmes alone do not provide grounds to affinity of subjects.

1.3.2 When forming the expert group, a sufficient assessment of all (partial) study programmes shall be guaranteed. The restriction to just one subject appraiser for each subject discipline represented in the cluster must be well-justified. The restriction to just one person each from professional practice and the student body must be well-justified, wherein the number of study programmes and professional areas to be assessed shall be taken into account.

1.3.3 The arrangement of a time for an on-site visit must guarantee that each study programme in the cluster can be assessed sufficiently for its compatibility to the criteria for accreditation of study programmes. This shall also be illustrated in the review report.

1.3.4 In study programmes for teacher training, the clustering can also be performed in a form specific to a school in well-justified cases. When setting up the expert group, it shall be guaranteed that an review report is carried out appropriate for the subject and school form.

Specific structural guidelines of the Länder in the sense of binding guidelines for the accreditation of study programmes pursuant to section 2 para. 1 no. 2 of the Accreditation Foundation Act (Akkreditierungs-Stiftungs-Gesetz)

(Resolution of Accreditation Council of 23 February 2013)

Bavaria

Specific structural guidelines of the Länder pursuant to communication from the Bavarian Ministry of State for Science, Research, and Art of 4 April 2011

1. Design of prerequisites for admittance to Master's study programmes:

Here, the following applies according to Art. 43 para. 5 clauses 1 and 4 of the Bavarian Higher Education Act (BayHSchG):

a) Consecutive Master's study programmes: admission to (such) a Master's study programme requires a university degree or certificate of equal value. Certificates of equal value are, in particular, state exams, and diplomas from universities of cooperative education, which correspond to the criteria set out in the resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs

of the Länder of 29 September 1995, and Bachelor's degrees from universities of cooperative education which meet the criteria of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder resolution of 15 October 2004. The HEIs can set further admission requirements through articles of association, in particular regarding proof of suitability for the specific study programme. The HEI can allow that the study programme can be started without fulfilling the admission requirements named above, if those requirements can be proved to be met no later than one year after the student has been accepted for the degree programme.

b) For post-professional Master's study programmes:

the requirements named under a) apply alongside the prerequisite that admission to post-professional Master's study programmes mandatorily requires qualified professional experience of generally no less than one year, after qualified graduation from an HEI within the meaning of the rules given in a).

2. Permissible total standard period of study in consecutive Bachelor's/Master's study programmes:

According to Art. 57 para. 2 clause 4 of the BayHSchG, standard periods of study extending beyond the total standard period of study of maximum five years may be ascertained in specially justified cases in tiered study programmes which lead to a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree building on this, continuing in the same subject, and deepening or extending knowledge beyond the subject; this also applies to study programmes which are carried out in special study forms, e.g. part-time.

3. Standard period of study and practical study semester in a university of applied science study programmes:

According to § 2 para. 1 clause 1 of the General Exam Regulations Ordinance for Universities of Applied Sciences (RaPO) of 17 October 2001 in the version of 6 August 2010, the standard period of study in Bachelor's study programmes at state universities of applied sciences in Bavaria shall in principle be seven semesters. A deviating standard period of study of six or eight semesters is only allowed in specially justified cases. In Master's study programmes, the standard period of study in principle equals three semesters; a standard period of study of two or four semesters is only permissible in specially justified cases.

According to § 2 para. 2 of the RaPO, Bachelor's study programmes generally include a practical study semester; Master's study programmes may include a practical study semester. A practical study semester is a study semester integrated into the degree programmes, governed, defined from a content aspect, overseen, and prepared and accompanied with HEI courses generally taken in a company or institution of professional practice outside of the HEI, and already dedicated significantly to an activity relating to the profession. As a rule, it encompasses a consecutive period of at least 20 weeks including accompanying courses. With regards to the legal effectiveness of a state recognition of non-state HEIs according to Art. 77 para. 1 of the BayHSchG, these principles shall also apply for the setting up of study courses at non-state HEIs in Bavaria.

Berlin

Specific structural guidelines of the Länder pursuant to communication of the Berlin Senate Administration of 10 June 2011

see Appendices 03a and 03b

Brandenburg**Specific structural guidelines of the Länder pursuant to communication from the Ministry for Science, Research, and Culture, April 2011**

Section 8 para. 4 clause 1 of the Brandenburg Higher Education Act (BbgHG): For admittance to artistic study courses, as a further prerequisite or in place of the school-leaving certificate according to clause 2, proof of artistic suitability may be required for admittance, and proof of particular suitability for sport studies may be required for admittance to sports science study programmes.

Section 8 para. 6 of the Brandenburg Higher Education Act (BbgHG): A prerequisite for admittance to a Master's study programme is an initial graduation from an institute of higher education sufficient for qualification for a profession. Suitability and qualification prerequisites beyond this may be ascertained by the HEIs for a Master's study course in the articles of association if this is demonstrably necessary on the grounds of specialist subject-related requirements of the Master's study programme in question. For post-professional Master's study programmes, proof of generally at least one year of professional practice is also necessary. Master's study programmes are open to Bachelor's graduates from all types of HEIs.

Section 4 para. 4 of the University Examination Ordinance (HSPV): The study programmes should be designed such that the time-frames for stud visits to other HEIs and in the professional world offer (mobility windows) without this extending the necessary duration of study.

Hessen**Specific structural guidelines for the Bundesland of Hessen regarding the "Common Structural Guidelines of the Länder for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Study Programmes" of 26 May 2010**

see Appendix 04

Programme of the Conference "The Future of Accreditation in Germany"**The Future of Accreditation in Germany**

First joint conference of Accreditation Council and Agencies

27 November 2012, Universitätsclub Bonn e.V., Konviktstr. 9, 53113 Bonn, Germany

10:30 Welcome

Prof Reinhold R. Grimm, Chairman of the Accreditation Council
 Prof Holger Burckhart, Representative of the Agencies on the Accreditation Council

10:45 Effects of accreditation in Germany

Prof Martin Ullrich, Music University of Nuremberg (Hochschule für Musik Nürnberg)
 (Moderation)
 Prof Barbara Kehm, International Centre for HEI Research, University of Kassel (Internationales Zentrum für Hochschulforschung, Universität Kassel)
 Prof Michael Kämper-van den Boogaart, Vice President for Teaching and Learning, Humboldt University Berlin (Humboldt-Universität Berlin)
 Dr Thomas Grünewald, Ministry for Science, Research, and Culture Brandenburg
 Doctor of Engineering Willi Fuchs, Director of the Association of German Engineers (Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI))
 Thorsten Sängler, University of Münster (Universität Münster)

12:00 Break**Press conference**

Prof Reinhold R. Grimm, Chairman of the Accreditation Council
 Prof Holger Burckhart, Representative of the Agencies on the Accreditation Council
 Udo Michallik, General Secretary of Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder
 Doctor of Engineering Thomas Kathöfer, General Secretary of German Rectors' Conference

13:00 Accreditation in Germany – An outside perspective

Peter Greisler, Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Moderation)
 Prof Anke Hanft, Chairwoman of the Board of AQ Austria, University of Oldenburg (Universität Oldenburg)
 Prof Hans Rudolf Heinimann, Federal Technical University of Zurich (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich)

14:00 Break**14:30 Where should the journey be headed? Perspectives from accreditation in Germany**

Professor Stefan Bartels, University of Applied Sciences, Lübeck (Fachhochschule Lübeck) (Moderation)
 Thomas May, General Secretary of the German Council of Science and Humanities
 Doctor of Engineering Thomas Kathöfer, General Secretary of the German Rectors' Conference
 Ministerial Director Dr Simone Schwanitz, Ministry for Science, Research and Art in Baden-Württemberg
 Udo Michallik, General Secretary of Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder

Ernst Baumann, Member of the Accreditation Council, Chairman of BMW working group (former)

Renate Singvogel, Head of the Education Policy Division, United Services Union

Julian Hiller, Student member of the Accreditation Council, University of Hanover (Universität Hannover)

16:00 Forecast and conclusion

Franz Börsch, Acting Managing Director of the Accreditation Council