

Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC) 10.09.2015

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# Institutional Accreditation under HEdA

## Information Sheet

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### 1. Statutory basis

- Article 30 Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA) dated 30.09.2011
- Article 4 and Article 10 HEdA accreditation guidelines dated 28 May 2015

### 2. Requirements for admission to institutional accreditation under HEdA

The requirements for institutional accreditation are stipulated in Article 30 HEdA and defined in the HEdA accreditation guidelines, with due consideration for the particularities and the autonomy of universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education and other institutions in the higher-education sector (hereinafter referred to as universities).

Article 4 of the HEdA accreditation guidelines regulates admission to the accreditation procedure. Paragraph 1 sets out the admission requirements to be met and paragraph 2 specifies which universities are admitted to the institutional accreditation procedure without checking the requirements in paragraph 1.

- 2.1 According to Article 4 (1), a university is admitted to the process of institutional accreditation if it meets the following requirements:
- a. The university respect the principles of freedom and the unity of teaching and research.
  - b. The university correspond to one of the following types of higher education institution:
    1. University
    2. University of applied sciences or university of teacher education.
  - c. The university meet if applicable, the admission requirements for the first level of studies under Articles 23-25 and 73 HEdA. Universities of applied sciences shall also fulfil the regulations on the structure of studies under Article 26 HEdA.
  - d. The university has a quality assurance system in place (Art. 30 (1), a HEdA).
  - e. The university is compatible with the European Higher Education Area.
  - f. The university has infrastructure and staff in Switzerland for teaching, research and services appropriate to its type and profile.
  - g. A cohort of the university students has completed a study programme.
  - h. The university has the resources to continue its operations over the long-term (Art. 30 (1), let. c HEdA) and has taken measures to ensure that students can complete a study programme.
  - i. The university is a legal entity in Switzerland.

- 2.2 Article 4 (2) states that a university is admitted to the institutional accreditation procedure without checking the requirements in Article 4 (1) if it meets one of the following requirements:
- a. The university is already institutionally accredited under HEdA.
  - b. The university was created under federal law before HEdA came into force.
  - c. The university was recognised as authorised for contributions based on the University Funding Act of 8 October 1994 (UFundA) and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act of 6 October 1995 (UASA) before HEdA came into force (Art. 75 (2) HEdA).
  - d. The university was already a public university of teacher education under cantonal law before HEdA came into force.

### **3. Procedural steps for institutional accreditation under HFKG**

- 3.1 The university shall file a well-founded application for institutional accreditation to the SAC in good time.
- 3.2 The SAC examines whether the university fulfils the requirements set by Art. 4 of the HEdA Accreditation Guidelines and decides on admission if it appropriate.
- 3.3 The SAC decides against admission if the university fails to meet the requirements set out in Article 4 (1) of the HEdA accreditation guidelines.
- 3.4 If it rules in favour of admission, the SAC forwards the documents to the agency for checking.
- 3.5 The group of experts assembled by the accreditation agency conducts an external evaluation to see whether the university meets the quality standards.
- 3.6 The accreditation agency submits its accreditation application (incl. documentation of relevance to the procedure<sup>1</sup>) to the SAC.
- 3.7 The SAC ascertains whether the agency application makes a suitable basis for a decision and sends it back to the accreditation agency if necessary.
- 3.8 The SAC decides on institutional accreditation on the basis of the agency application. It has the following options here:
  - a. Accreditation without any conditions
  - b. Accreditation with conditions
  - c. Refusal of accreditation
- 3.9 The SAC publishes a list of accredited universities that have received the designation right.

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<sup>1</sup> The following documents are relevant to the procedure: Self-evaluation report, report by the group of experts and university position statement on the expert report.

#### **4. Request**

In its reasoned request, the university proves that it satisfies the requirements for admission to institutional accreditation with specific reference (if applicable) to Article 4 (1) HFKG accreditation guidelines.

The request within the meaning of Article 4 (1) HFKG accreditation guidelines comprises a short report and documents to support the statements made in the report. The request, incl. attachments, must be sent to the Swiss Accreditation Council by electronic means (e-mail or USB stick).

The university has access to a template, which explains in more detail the nature and extent of the documents to be submitted.

#### **5. Deadlines**

An accreditation procedure can normally be expected to last between 18 and 24 months.

The SAC meets four times a year. The meeting dates can be found on the website of the Accreditation Council (<http://www.akkreditierungsrat.ch>).

#### **6. Ruling**

The ruling on admission in no way prejudices the decision on institutional accreditation. The quality assurance system is examined within the scope of the accreditation procedure.