Organisational Regulations of the Swiss Accreditation Council
(OReg-SAC)

of 12 March 2015 (version of 16 September 2016)

The Swiss Accreditation Council, based on Article 21 para. 5 of the Federal Act of 30 September 2011 on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector (HEdA), on Article 2 para. 2 let. d no. 1 of the Federal-Cantonal Agreement of 26 February 2015 on Cooperation in Higher Education (FCA-CHE), issues the following Regulations:

Art. 1 Object
1 These Regulations govern organisational aspects of the Swiss Accreditation Council (Accreditation Council).
2 In addition, they list the organisational provisions and tasks that are already set forth in superordinate legislation.

Art. 2 Organisation of the Accreditation Council
1 The Accreditation Council is a joint federal and cantonal body responsible for accreditation and quality assurance within the Swiss higher education sector. It is also the accreditation body responsible for accreditation procedures set forth in HEdA.
2 Under Article 21 para. 4 HEdA, the Accreditation Council is independent.
3 Under Article 22 para. 2 HEdA, the Accreditation Council supervises the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (Accreditation Agency). The Accreditation Agency runs the Secretariat of the Accreditation Council and provides it with administrative support.

Art. 3 Members
1 Under Article 21 para. 1 HEdA, the Accreditation Council comprises 15–20 independent members; in particular, these members represent higher education institutions, professional organisations, students, mid-level faculty as well as professors and lecturers. Teaching and research fields at higher education institutions as well as gender must be adequately represented. A minority of at least five members must be mainly involved in activities abroad.

1 SR 414.20
2 SR 414.205
Based on Article 2 para. 2 let. b no. 1 FCA-CHE, the Swiss Higher Education Council elects the members of the Accreditation Council for a four-year term of office. Each member may be re-elected only once.

The members must carry out their duties in person. Their duties may not be carried out by proxy.

**Art. 4** Meetings of the Accreditation Council

1. Generally speaking, the Accreditation Council meets four times per year. Additional meetings may be convened if the President, the Presidium and one-third of the members so desire.

2. Meetings are attended by Accreditation Council members and other participants under Article 7.

3. Members have the right to submit motions and vote. These rights can only be exercised personally.

4. Members may not be accompanied.

5. Generally speaking, meeting documents must be sent to members and other participants at least two weeks in advance.

6. Meeting documents shall be drafted in an official language of Switzerland. If necessary, the Accreditation Agency shall have reports translated into English.

7. Discussions of the Accreditation Council are not public.

**Art. 5** Decision-making procedure

1. Each member of the Accreditation Council shall have one vote.

2. The Accreditation Council has a quorum when two-thirds of its members are present.

3. Decisions concerning institutional accreditation procedures require a qualified majority of two-thirds of the votes of the members present.

4. For all other decisions and resolutions, a simple majority of the votes of the members present shall suffice.

5. Members may abstain from casting their vote.

6. They shall abstain and leave the meeting room whenever they have a direct interest in the business at hand.

7. The abstaining member shall be deemed not present.

**Art. 6** Decisions by circular letter

1. The Accreditation Council may reach decisions by circular letter if no member wishes the business at hand to be addressed in a meeting.

2. Decisions reached by circular letter require a qualified majority of two-thirds of the votes cast.
Art. 7 Attendance of meetings
Apart from members, the following individuals attend the meetings of the Accreditation Council:

a. A clerk from the Secretariat of the Accreditation Council who has been asked to take the minutes;
b. The Director of the Accreditation Agency who shall act in an advisory capacity;
c. Other guests as needed.

Art. 8 Minutes

1. The meetings of the Accreditation Council shall be recorded in the form of minutes, which shall summarise in an official language of Switzerland the various discussion points and decisions reached.
2. The minutes shall be signed by both the President and the secretary who takes the minutes.
3. The minutes must be approved by the Accreditation Council.
4. Decisions reached by circular letter shall be included in the minutes of the very next meeting.

Art. 9 Composition and tasks of the Presidium

1. The Presidium of the Accreditation Council shall be comprised of:
   a. The President and
   b. Two Vice-Presidents.
2. The Presidium prepares plenary meetings.

Art. 10 President

1. The President shall be elected by the Swiss Higher Education Council for a four-year term of office, which may be renewed once.
2. The President leads the Accreditation Council. This includes:
   a. Chairing the meetings of the Accreditation Council;
   b. Making sure that the Accreditation Council carries out its tasks in a timely and suitable manner and that it coordinates, takes action and completes activities;
   c. Ensuring compliance with decisions of the Accreditation Council;
   d. Seeing to it that supervision of the Accreditation Agency is organised and handled in a suitable manner;
   e. Representing the Accreditation Council in dealings with the outside world and signing on its behalf;
f. Advising education policy bodies in accreditation matters;
g. Informing the general public as needed concerning discussions and decisions of the Accreditation Council.

Art. 11 Vice-Presidents
The Vice-Presidents are elected by the Swiss Higher Education Council for a two-year term of office. Re-election is permitted.

Art. 12 Committees
1 The Accreditation Council may establish committees comprised of internal members to prepare HEdA-related decisions.
2 The Accreditation Council may establish committees comprised of external members to prepare decisions relating to special legislation, particularly in relation to programme accreditation for medical training leading to a federally recognised qualification under the Federal Act of 23 June 2006 on University Courses for Medical Professions (MedPA) or other special legislation.

Art. 13 Appeals commission
1 The Accreditation Council shall establish an Appeals Commission to assess requests to reconsider decisions of the Accreditation Council.
2 The Appeals Commission shall be comprised of three members, who are not members of the Accreditation Council.
3 If one of the members must abstain, then the Presidium shall appoint a substitute member.
4 Justified requests to reconsider a decision shall be addressed to the Accreditation Council within 30 days. The Accreditation Council shall submit the complaint to the Appeals Commission for a reasoned opinion. The Appeals Commission shall take a written stance on the matter without further examination.
5 The Accreditation Council shall make a final decision on the basis of the reasoned opinion submitted by the Appeals Commission.

Art. 14 Tasks of the Accreditation Council as an accreditation body
In its capacity as an accreditation body, the Accreditation Council carries out the following tasks:

a. Under Article 33 HEdA, referring to the request submitted by the Accreditation Agency, the Accreditation Council shall decide on institutional accreditation of higher education institutions and other institutions within the higher education sector as well as on programme accreditation.
b. Under Article 21 para. 6 HEdA, it shall submit its annual accounts, financial plan and budget proposal to the Swiss Higher Education Council for approval.

c. Under Article 21 para. 7 HEdA, it may recognise other Swiss or foreign accreditation agencies so that they may carry out procedures set forth in HEdA.

d. It shall establish a list of all higher education institutions and other institutions within the higher education sector that have been institutionally accredited under HEdA as well as a list of all accredited degree programmes.

e. It shall periodically inform the Swiss Higher Education Council of its activities.

**Art. 15** Tasks of the Accreditation Council as supervisory body of the Accreditation Agency and as Commission of AAQ

1 As the supervisory body of AAQ the Accreditation Council carries out the following tasks for the Accreditation Agency:

a. Under Article 2 para. 2 let. d no. 2 FCA-CHE, it appoints the Director of the Accreditation Agency; at the request of the Director, it also appoints a deputy.

b. At the request of the Director, it approves the strategic plan of the Accreditation Agency.

c. At the request of the Director, it approves the financial plan, the budget proposal and the annual accounts of the Accreditation Agency to the attention of the Higher Education Council.

d. It may establish a Commission of AAQ as the decision-making authority of the Accreditation Agency in procedures on behalf of third parties and as an authority of internal quality assurance in all procedures of the Accreditation Agency.

2 As the Commission of the AAQ, the Accreditation Council performs the following tasks in particular:

a. It assures that the procedures of the Accreditation Agency carried out on behalf of third parties comply with the international standards for accreditation and quality assurance.

b. It adopts the quality standards and guidelines of procedures of the Accreditation Agency on behalf of third parties.

c. It adopts the review panels in the procedures of the Accreditation Agency.

d. It decides on procedures of the Accreditation Agency on behalf of third parties, in particular system accreditation, certification as well as evaluation.

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Under Article 7 para. 2 FCA-CHE, the Accreditation Agency is authorised to sign for accreditation and quality assurance procedures to be carried out on behalf of third parties.

Art. 16 Internal quality assurance of the Accreditation Council
The Accreditation Council has a procedure to control the quality of its own activities.

Art. 17 Remuneration and expenses
1 Remuneration of the Presidium and the members of the Accreditation Council shall be set forth in the appointment decision made by the Swiss Higher Education Council.
2 For the reimbursement of expenses of the Accreditation Council and the Accreditation Agency, the rules established in Articles 41 to 53 (Section 6: Additional benefits financed by the employer) of the FDF Ordinance of 6 December 2001 to the Federal Personnel Ordinance (FPersO-FDF)\(^5\) shall be applied analogously.

Art. 18 Delegation of powers under personnel legislation
Under Article 4 para. 1 let. b und Article 10 let. c of the Personnel Regulations of the Swiss Higher Education Council of 26 February 2015\(^6\), the Accreditation Council shall delegate to the Director of the Accreditation Agency the power to establish, change and terminate the employment relationships of Accreditation Agency employees as well as the power to make all related decisions.

Art. 19 Abstentions
The rules set forth in Article 10 of Federal Act of 20 December 1968 on Administrative Procedure (APA)\(^7\) shall apply to the Presidium and the members of the Accreditation Council.

Art. 20 Commencement
These Regulations\(^8\) shall retroactively come into effect on 1 January 2015.

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\(^5\) SR 172.220.111.31
\(^6\) [www.shk.de](http://www.shk.de) > Dokumentation > Rechtliche Grundlagen
\(^7\) SR 172.021
\(^8\) In keeping with Art. 21 para. 5 HEdA, the current draft of the Organisational Regulations of the Swiss Accreditation Council were approved by the Higher Education Council on 28 May 2015.