



FH MÜNSTER
University of Applied Sciences

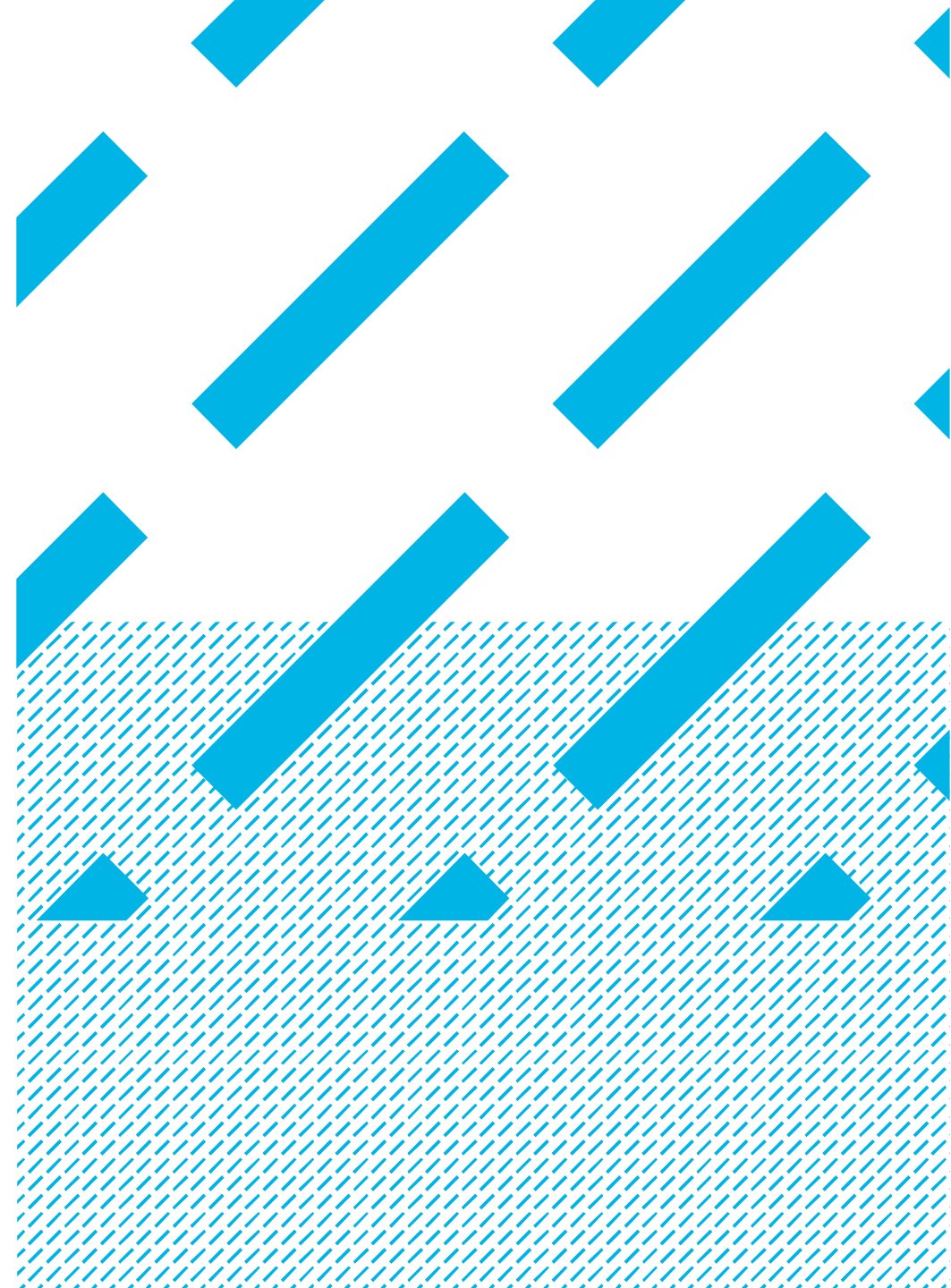
Experiences & good practices in the field of institutional accreditation

Presentation by Dr. Sonja Mikeska

Wandelwerk – Centre for Quality Assurance and Enhancement at FH Münster

29.03.2022 Seminar “[International institutional accreditation: methodology and procedures](#)” in the frame of the project QFORTE (Enhancement of Quality Assurance in Higher Education System in Moldova)

WANDELWERK



Welcome & Introduction



My background & experiences

with regard to institutional accreditation



Dr. Sonja Mikeska

2006-2021 *Quality Manager at Saarland University*

- Establishment of QM System and System Accreditation 2012 (among the first universities in Germany)
- System-Reaccreditation 2018-2020

2021-now *Quality Manager at FH Münster*

- Second „Development Cycle“ within System-Reaccreditation 2018-2026

2019-now *Peer Reviewer in International Institutional A.*

- 2019 Turks and Caicos Islands
- 2021 Kazakhstan



Overview

Presentation Outline

I. What does “System Accreditation” imply for German HEIs?

- Quality Management Systems for Teaching & Learning based on the ESG
- Quality Cycle for Study Programmes and Differences to Programme Accreditation
- Advantages & Opportunities of System Accreditation

II. Good practice at FH Münster

- Specifics of FH Münster’s Quality Management System
- Specific form of “cumulative“ system reaccreditation based on “development cycles”
- Our experiences

III. Experiences in international institutional accreditation

- Challenges & Opportunities

I. System Accreditation

Quality Management for Teaching & Learning



System Accreditation

A special form of „Institutional Accreditation“ in Germany

Institutional Accreditation focuses on the internal quality management system of an HEI.

System Accreditation focuses on the internal quality management system **of teaching & learning** in an HEI:

- The system accreditation procedure checks that all the structures and processes of relevance to teaching and learning meet the regulations of the Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty and the accreditation criteria of the specimen decree (which have been adopted by the German “Länder”).
- After successful system accreditation, the German HEI will obtain a **self-accrediting status**, which means it can take responsibility for reviewing its own study programmes internally and external programme accreditation is no longer obligatory!

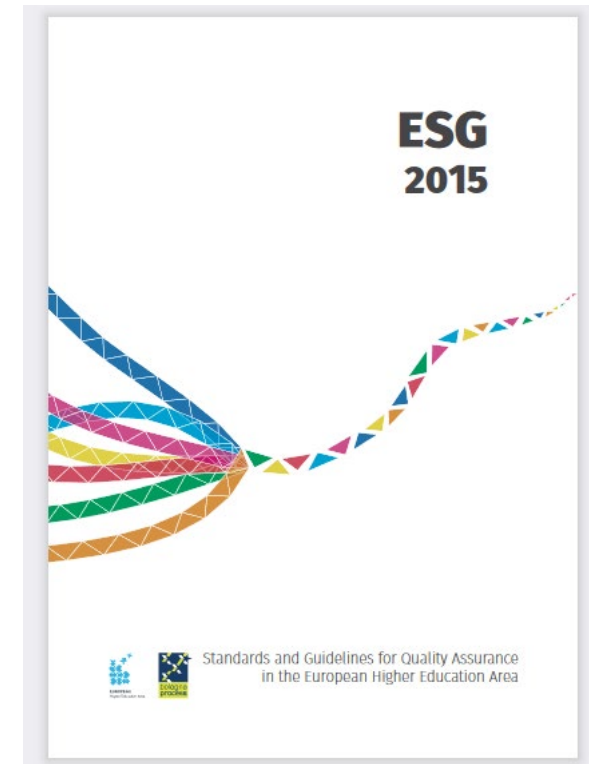
System Accreditation

Standards for setting up the internal QM system

Although „system accreditation“ is a typical German feature, the standards which are needed, correspond to the **Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** in the section II part 1: „Internal quality assurance“

Good practice:

- The closer your QMS is aligned with the ESG, the easier becomes international cooperation in teaching & learning with partners, who rely on the same basis (relevant e.g. for joint programmes)
- When setting up a QMS, keep it as simple („lean“) as possible and as complex as necessary for the quality
- Align it with the „culture“ of your institution (e.g. process-oriented / service-oriented / agile / sustainable ...)



ESG in a nutshell

Overview: 10 standards for IQA + 10 Inspirations for Good Practice

1 Policy for quality assurance

→ Linked to Educational Mission Statement



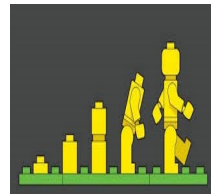
2 Design and approval of programmes → „Internal Accreditaton“



3 Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment → OBE



4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification → Process Management



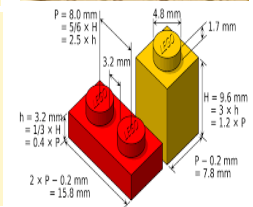
5 Teaching Staff → Onboarding support



6 Learning resources and student support → e.g. in English language



7 Information management → Clear communication strategy



8 Public information → Transparency & new media



9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes → set of evaluation procedures



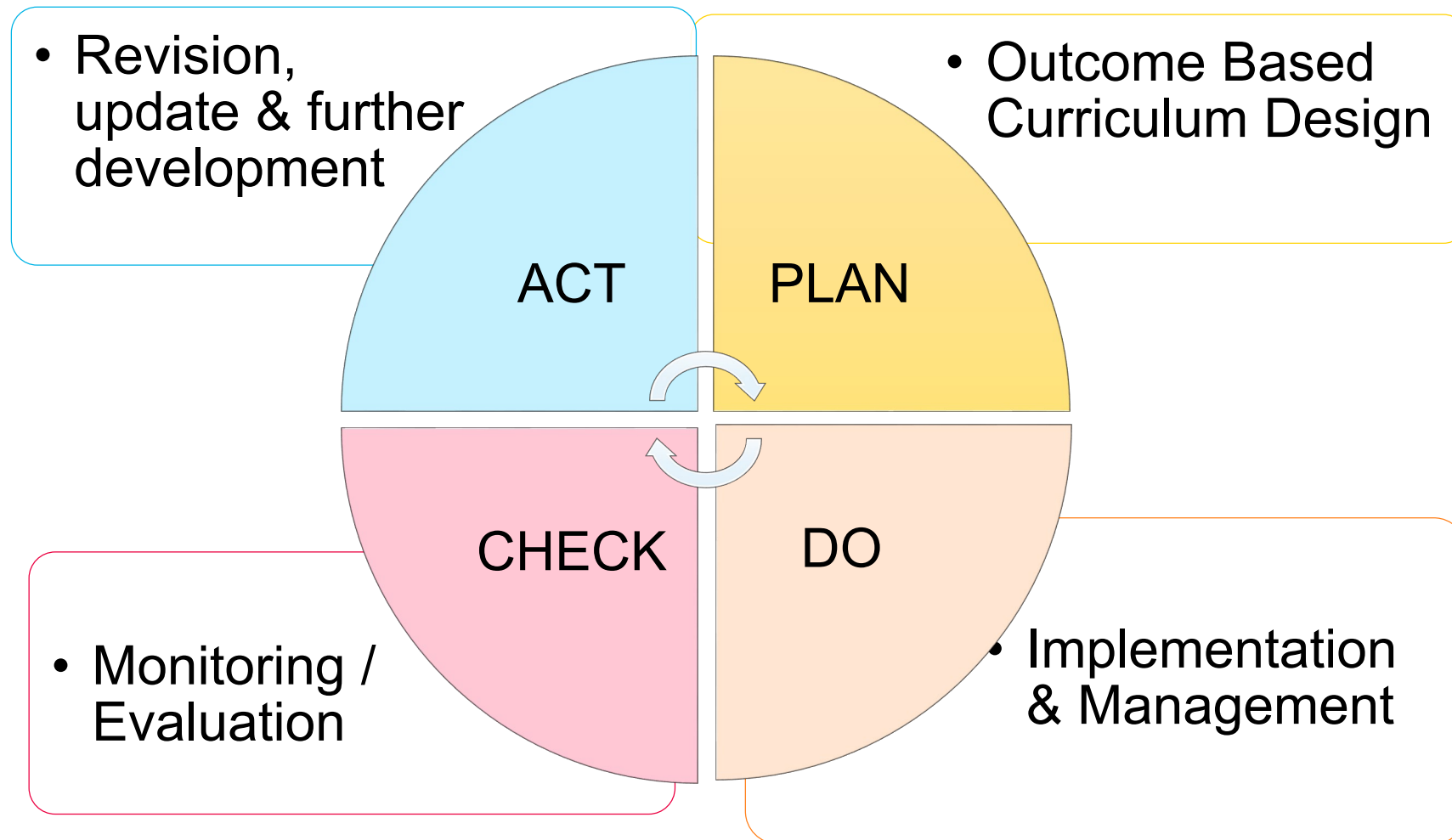
10 Cyclical external quality assurance → External elements in IQA



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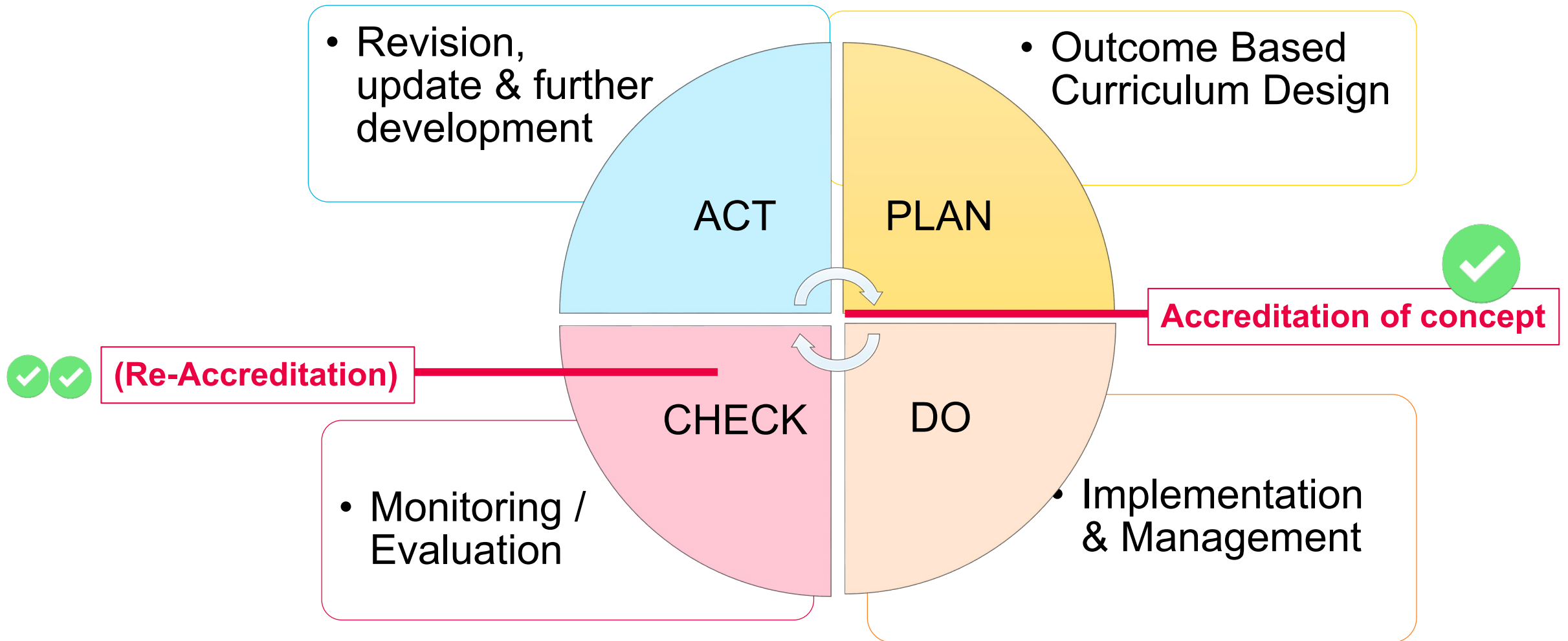
Quality Cycle for Study Programmes

Based on PDCA cycle



Quality Cycle for Study Programmes

And its accreditation



Quality Cycle for Study Programmes

Differences to external programme accreditation

An internal quality management system, which is object of a System Accreditation, **CAN** use internally **similar procedures** for INTERNAL study programme accreditation and reaccreditation, as it would be the case for EXTERNAL programme accreditation and reaccreditations:

- **Accreditation** of the study programme **concept** (formal check by internal Quality assurance unit and content-related checks by external peer reviewers including representatives from the scientific community, employers and external students) -> **check for plausibility!**
- **Re-Accreditation** of the study programme after max. 8 years **in practice** (formal check by internal Quality assurance unit and content-related checks by external peer reviewers including representatives from the scientific community, employers and external students) -> **check for feasibility!**

System Accreditation

Advantages & Opportunities

However, an internal quality management system, which is object of a System Accreditation, also has the freedom to assure the quality of study programmes in other appropriate ways, e.g. via:

- **Other forms of external reviews or audits** (e.g. “Network Quality Audit” based on “critical friend approach”)
- **Continuous monitoring via advisory boards** (including external members)
- **Shorter periods of reviewing than usual reaccreditation cycles ...**
- **Focus not only on Quality Assurance, but also Quality Enhancement & Development**

Be creative and consider the specific „culture“ of your institution!



II. Good Practice

At FH Münster



FH Münster

Basic figures (Winter Semester 21/22)

- 15.561 Students
- 1.287 Staff (including 301 Professors)
- 13 Faculties, various disciplines:
 - Engineering
 - Art
 - Social Sciences
 - Business
 - Interdisciplinary Offers



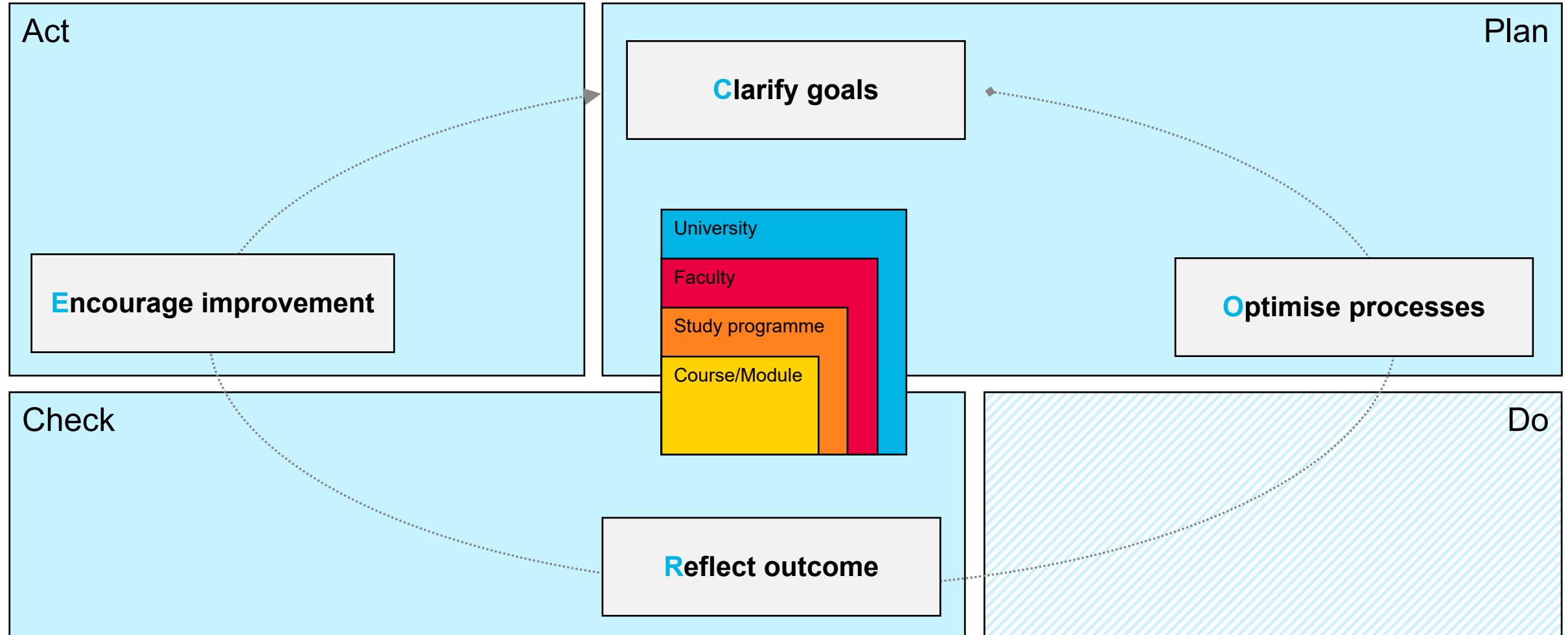
FH Münster

QA system accredited 2011-2018 & re-accredited 2018-2026



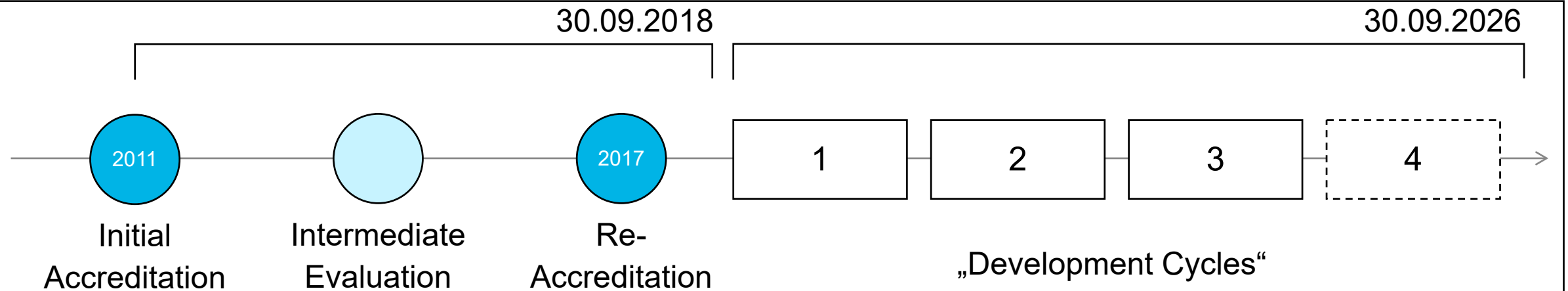
Specifics of our QM system

The CORE-concept for quality enhancement



Specifics of our System Accreditation

„Cumulative“ Re-Accreditation



The idea behind our „Development Cycles“:

- Each cycle focuses on a specific QM aspect in depth
- Inspiration for further development & enhancement
- Integration of various experts with in-depth-expertise on individual topics
- Higher motivation & „self-efficacy“

Cumulative Re-Accreditation

Overview of Development Cycles



Cumulative Documentation: 2026

Cycle 1
Educational Mission
Statement
2018 - 2020

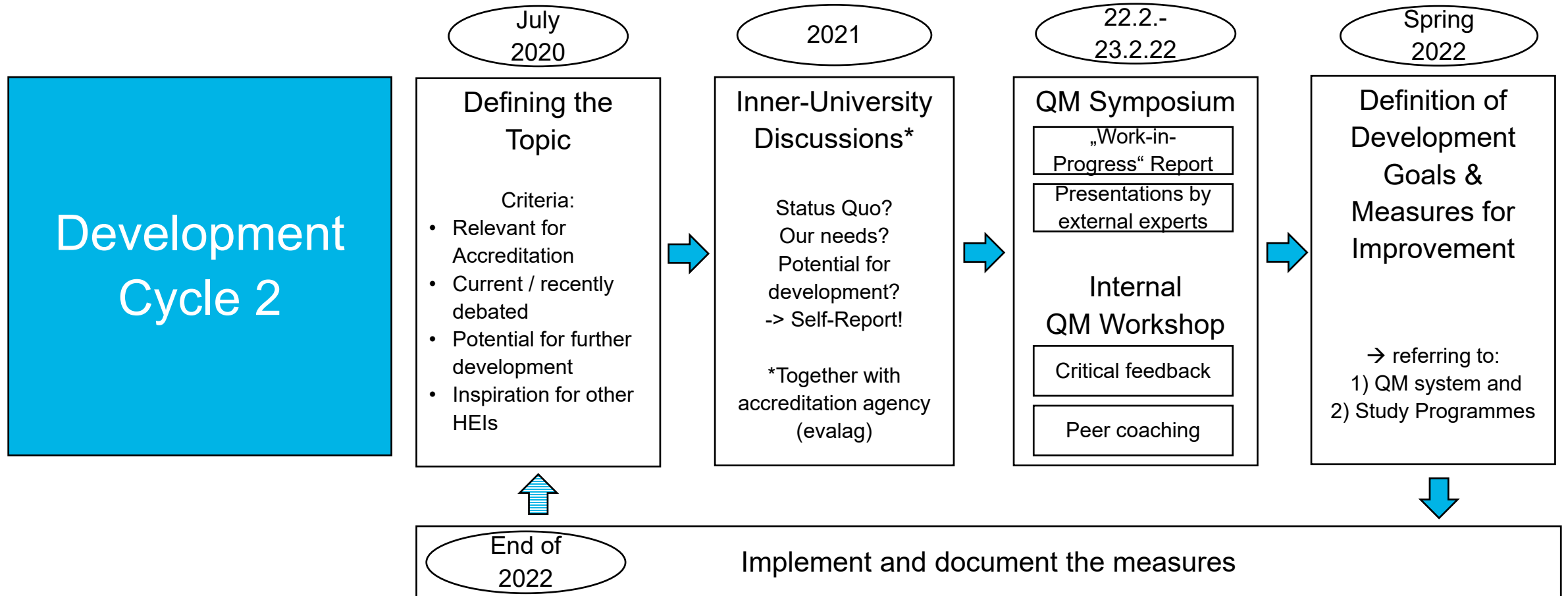
Cycle 2
QM for Cooperative
Study Programmes
2020 - 2022

Cycle 3
???
2023 - 2025

Final
Reflection

Cumulative Re-Accreditation

Our activities in the current development cycle



Cumulative System Reaccreditation

Experiences & Lessons Learned

- Emphasis on Development & Enhancement
- Not only dialogue with peer reviewers, but broad exchange with other universities, as QM symposium is open for QM professionals from other institutions
- In-depth-focus on certain topics
- Can be adapted to specific situations (in a way „agile“)
- High motivation & acceptance within the institution („quality culture“ based on dialogue & exchange)
- Transparency about internal processes necessary in order to be trusted externally
- Role model for others to use „alternative“ or „individually adjusted“ formats

III. International Institutional Accreditation

Challenges & Opportunities



Challenges & Opportunities

(based on my experiences as a peer reviewer)

CHALLENGES (?)

- **What's the added value of an international institutional accreditation?**
- **Is it worth the effort & costs?**
- **Will it be recognized in the own country? Can synergies be used with national accreditation procedures?**
- **How can national & institutional specifics best be taken into account by international reviewers?**

OPPORTUNITIES (!)

- **It can be used as part of the internationalization strategy of an HEI!**
- **It can lead to an increase of reputation for smaller and internationally lesser known universities!**
- **It is a good occasion not only for quality assurance, but also quality development: new insights & external inspirations can be used for reflecting on & innovating internal systems!**



Your comments and questions are welcome!

The Higher Education Management Programme
Our international training and consultancy branch
<https://en.fh-muenster.de/hem>

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