



International Institutional Accreditation: Methodology, Procedure, Assessment Framework

**Seminar: “International Institutional Accreditation –
Methodology and Procedures”, University of Leipzig,
March 29-30, 2022**

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**Central Evaluation and
Accreditation Agency (ZEVA)**

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ZEvA – Profile and Mission

- **Profile:** founded in 1995, independent non-profit foundation since 2009, first accreditation agency licensed in Germany
- **Prime Mission:** promoting quality in higher education by means of external assessment & consulting
- **Network:** founding member of ENQA, registered in EQAR, member of CEENQA and ECA

ZEVA – Services and Activities

- **Core Activities (Germany):** programme accreditation, institutional accreditation, evaluation, certification and consulting
- **International Activities:** international accreditation of study programmes, institutional accreditation, institutional audits (Austria)
- **Regional Focus Areas:** Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia), Arab World (Egypt, Kurdish region of Iraq, Abu Dhabi)

International Institutional Accreditation: The ZEvA Approach

Motivation: Why Apply for IA?

- IA **increases trust** in the HEI and its programmes
- IA can be a **driver of self-reflection and change**
- IA may facilitate **student mobility**
- IA facilitates **quality enhancement & quality culture**
- IA takes a **comprehensive view** at quality

Focus of the Assessment

*In order to pass the institutional accreditation procedure successfully, higher education institutions should be able to demonstrate that their **quality management in teaching and learning** is effective and fulfils the requirements of the ESG, Part 1.*

Basic Conditions

- **Voluntary procedure** without direct legal/formal consequences
- **Peer-review procedure** based on the ESG
- **Flexible options:**
 - special focus on selected topics or faculties
 - extended focus on other core activities (research, third mission)

Basic Conditions

- **No self-accrediting status** implied
- **No accreditation of study programmes** implied – but...
- ...**selected programmes** may be assessed and accredited as part of the institutional accreditation procedure

Key Principles of Assessment

- **Respecting the autonomy** of a HEI
- International perspective – but **no benchmarking** exercise
- **Sensitivity to context** (national, regional, type of HEI, disciplinary cultures...)
- **Two elements:** Quality Assurance/**Compliance** (with international QA standards) *and* Reflection/Quality Development/**Enhancement**

Procedural Milestones: Overview

- **Self-report** of the HEI
- **Site visit** of the expert panel
- **Expert report** including a final vote
- **Final decision** taken by the ZEvA Commission
- Standard **accreditation period**: 6 years
- **Conditional accreditation** is possible

Duration of the procedure: ca. 18 months

Procedural Milestones: Self-Report

- **Description** of the HEI and its quality assurance system (40-50 pages), with reference to IA focus areas
- **Appendix** of additional documents (strategy papers, basic institutional regulations, quality handbook, results of evaluation surveys, reports...)
- **Main goals:** self-assessment and self-analysis of the HEI, documentation/proof of adherence to standards, providing sample documents for illustration

Procedural Milestones: Site Visit

- **2-3 days** at the university (online format as emergency option)
- **Interviews** with different stakeholders (leadership board, QM department, students, graduates, teaching faculty, admin staff), tour of the campus
- **Main goals:** “completing the picture”, in-depth discussion of selected aspects, gaining a better understanding of the HEI and its QM system

Procedural Milestones: Evaluation Report

- **The evaluation report includes**
 - a general appraisal of the HEI's quality management in teaching and learning
 - an assessment against the accreditation criteria
 - commendations of good practice and recommendations for improvement
 - overall vote on the international accreditation of the HEI (may include suggestions for conditions)

Procedural Milestones: Evaluation Report

- HEI receives report for notification and may lodge a **written response** directed at the experts and the commission
- Report is **published upon decision-taking** (incl. the HEI's response and the final accreditation decision)

Expert Panels: Selection Criteria

- Stakeholder representation (academics/university professors, students, professionals from outside academia)
- Standard panel size: 4-6 persons
- Experience in (cross-border) QA and accreditation
- Ideally: familiarity with the national higher education system, language and culture
- Role of experts as “critical friends”, supporting enhancement and further development

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

- 1) **Internal Quality Assurance**
- 2) **Institutional Objectives in Student Learning**
- 3) **Study Programmes**
- 4) **Resources and Learning Environment**
- 5) **Teaching Staff**

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

- **Internal Quality Assurance**
 - Policy for Quality Assurance
 - Adequate procedures, instruments and processes
 - Clear responsibilities for QM
 - Sufficient resources for QM

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

- **Institutional Objectives in Student Learning**
 - Shared understanding of quality across the institution
 - Quality goals for teaching and learning:
transparent, plausible, achievable?

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

- **QA of Study Programmes**
 - Clear definition of goals and ILOs at programme level
 - Student-centered approach to teaching, constructive alignment
 - Well-managed student life cycle
 - Transparency
 - Continuous monitoring and improvement of study programmes

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

- **Resources and Learning Environment**
 - HEI ensures there are sufficient support & advisory services for students
 - HEI ensures there are adequate infrastructure & facilities
 - Continuous monitoring and improvement of learning environment

Assessment Criteria/Focus Areas

➤ Teaching Staff

- HEI takes measures to ensure that there is a sufficient number of qualified teaching faculty for all study programmes
- HEI offers opportunities for further training & professional development
- Transparent and adequate procedures for staff recruitment are in place

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?