

# System for Internal Quality Management of AHPGS



## 1. Principles

AHPGS has a system of internal quality management that incorporates internal and external feedback processes and ensures analysis and reflection of its own processes.

- **Aims and Objectives of AHPGS**

Purpose and tasks of AHPGS e.V. and AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH are defined in § 2 of the statutes respectively. The mission statement of AHPGS has been decided by the General Assembly and is continuously developed.

- **Goals of the Internal Quality Assurance**

The central goal of the internal quality assurance of the AHPGS is the continuous review and improvement of internal processes in order to achieve an effective and efficient fulfillment of goals and objectives. The measures are based on the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" and the requirements of the "European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)".

- **Quality Assurance Objects**

The objects of internal quality assurance are processes and decisions of AHPGS to fulfill its goals and tasks. A distinction is made between five core tasks that are of equal value, interdependent and mutually influential:

1. Ensuring listing in the "European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)", approval by the German Accreditation Council in Germany, membership in the "European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)".
2. Proper and high-quality implementation of assessment and accreditation procedures.
3. Promotion and development of the "Bologna Process" in Germany and abroad.
4. Ensuring and developing human resources.
5. Efficient and economically sustainable operational management.

- **Structure of the Quality Assurance**

To ensure sustainable internal quality assurance, AHPGS has an organizational structure with interrelated committees and positions:

- The highest (control- and) decision-making body of AHPGS e.V. is the **General Assembly**, which usually meets once a year, takes note of the reports of the Board, discusses them and discharges the Board.
- The **Board** of AHPGS e.V. conducts the business of the association, is accountable to the General Assembly and is responsible for all relevant decisions in the time between the General Assemblies.
- According to the statutes, the **narrower Board** (according to § 26 German Civil Code, BGB) has the task of the Shareholders' Meeting of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH.
- The **management of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH** is appointed by the Shareholders' Meeting. Its task is to manage the business of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH.
- **The Accreditation Commission** of AHPGS e.V. is appointed by the Board. It makes decisions on accreditation and institutional procedures. The Accreditation Commission is responsible for the nomination of experts.
- In accordance with its statutes, the Board of AHPGS e.V. has set up a **Complaints Committee** to hear and decide on appeals and objections by higher education institutions against the implementation of assessment procedures and accreditation procedures, as well as on complaints relating to accreditation decisions.
- The employees of the office of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH are responsible for the formal examination and implementation of the assessment and accreditation procedures.

The organizational units, which work separately from one another, have defined relationships with one another.

## **2. Process-Related Procedures of Internal Quality Assurance**

The procedures relate to the service delivery processes for operating on the five "quality assurance objects" listed above.

### **2.1 Ensuring listing in the register and accreditation by the German Accreditation Council.**

#### **2.1.1 Quality Standards**

The AHPGS complies with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" and the requirements of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

### **2.1.2 Quality Measures**

- The management informs continuously and promptly the employees of the office as well as all organs and committees of AHPGS about current changes and decisions concerning the regulations for the implementation of assessment and accreditation procedures.
- The management informs the employees of the office as well as all organs and committees of AHPGS about current topics of the international discussion, about questions of accreditation in general and questions about its quality assurance in particular.
- The management represents AHPGS in meetings held for the agencies at the domestic and international level.
- The management cooperates with the German Accreditation Council.
- AHPGS cooperates with international bodies and organizations, especially related to the listing at EQAR.

## **2.2 Proper and High-Quality Implementation of Accreditation Procedures**

AHPGS assesses study programs (program accreditation) and internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions (system accreditation) in Germany. Abroad, AHPGS assesses and accredits study programs (program accreditation) and conducts institutional evaluations.

### **2.2.1 Quality Standards**

The procedures are carried out effectively, transparently and efficiently by AHPGS. They are based on the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" They ensure high predictability and consistency of reports and decisions.

### **2.2.2 Quality Measures**

- On its website, AHPGS provides information on the legal regulations and requirements, the services offered, the criteria and the organization of the implementation of assessment and accreditation procedures in Germany and abroad
- The management and the office of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH inform higher education institutions or their representatives on request about the applicable criteria and the organization of the implementation of procedures.

- The office of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH examines the submitted documents, clarifies open questions regarding the non-fulfillment of criteria with the representatives of the higher education institution, if necessary, and prepares a standardized report.
- The experts nominated by the Accreditation Commission are contacted by the office and prepared for their tasks.
- Potential conflicts of interest of experts are clarified by a standardized questionnaire. The decision as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists lies with the management of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH and the spokesperson of the Accreditation Commission.
- The office informs the higher education institution about the composition of the group of experts. The higher education institution has a justified right of objection. The decision as to whether or not there is a conflict of interest lies with the management of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH and the spokesperson of the Accreditation Commission.
- The office organizes the on-site visit in cooperation with the higher education institution and the experts.
- The Accreditation Commission decides in the accreditation procedures on the basis of all necessary documents. If conditions are imposed, the AHPGS checks and documents the implementation of the conditions by the higher education institutions. If the Accreditation Council decides on the accreditation, it is responsible for the examination of the fulfillment of the conditions.
- Decisions of the Accreditation Commission are communicated to the applicant higher education institution by the administrative office.
- The higher education institution has a right of appeal. The procedure is formally regulated and published on the website of AHPGS.
- The employees responsible for the conduct of a procedure document the procedure and its results.
- The office documents all special incidents in the performance of assessment and accreditation procedures.
- AHPGS regularly conducts a survey of the cooperating higher education institutions as well as a survey of the experts and prepares an evaluation report.
- The evaluation reports are discussed within the office with regard to necessary consequences. A statement is prepared for this purpose.
- The evaluation reports and the statement of the office are presented by the management to the Board and the General Assembly, which make the necessary decisions, if applicable.

- The results of the evaluation reports are published on the website of AHPGS.
- AHPGS has a concept on Standard ESG 3.4 and regularly produces Thematic Analyses describing and analyzing findings obtained during the implementation of procedures. The findings are discussed in the AHPGS and published on the website.

## **2.3 Promotion and Development of the "Bologna Process" in Germany and in Europe**

As an accreditation agency, AHPGS is committed to the consistent implementation and further development of the criteria of the "Bologna Process".

### **2.3.1 Quality Standards**

AHPGS is committed to ensuring that the philosophy and criteria of the "Bologna Process" are consistently implemented in general at higher education institutions in Germany and abroad.

### **2.3.2 Quality Measures**

- Participation in national and international events on the "Bologna Process".
- Membership of AHPGS e.V. in national and international organizations with relevance to the "Bologna Process"; (e.g., ENQA, CEENQA, INQAHEE on an international level and the German Public Health Association (DGPH) and the German Association for Public and Private Welfare (Deutscher Verein) among others on a national level).
- Cooperation (agreements) with German and international accreditation agencies.
- Publication of scientific contributions and thematic analyses on the "Bologna Process" by staff members and mandate holders of AHPGS.

## **2.4 Ensuring and Developing Human Resources**

The competence of the employees, the honorary mandate holders, the experts, and the members of the committees of AHPGS are the decisive prerequisite for the quality of the work services.

### **2.4.1 Quality Standards**

AHPGS has high quality standards for all mandate holders and employees. This refers to the evidence of a high-quality academic education and an academic

professional practice, as well as to relevant experience in the evaluation and quality assurance of research and teaching at higher education institutions. In addition, AHPGS ensures that competent representatives of the stakeholders relevant for the implementation of accreditation procedures (academics from higher education institutions, representatives of students and professional practice) are included in all relevant committees in appropriate numbers.

#### **2.4.2 Quality Measures**

- Carefully hearing and reviewing individuals (e.g., potential conflicts of interest) prior to election (or appointment) to AHPGS boards and committees.
- Carefully review applications when filling staff positions in AHPGS offices.
- Induction of newly elected or appointed mandate holders.
- Induction and training of new employees.
- Regular staff meetings (and the recording of these meetings) for further training and discussion of current issues.
- Obligation of all employees to participate in further education and training events and to prepare corresponding conference reports.
- Annual holding of a working conference of AHPGS committees with presentations and discussions on current accreditation issues.

### **2.5 Efficient and Economically Sustainable Operational Management**

Responsible management is a prerequisite for the existence and development of AHPGS, as well as for ensuring the high quality of the services provided.

#### **2.5.1 Quality Standards**

AHPGS is financed by membership fees and the funds generated by the conduct of assessment and accreditation assignments. All mandate holders and employees are obliged to handle the available funds efficiently.

#### **2.5.2 Quality Measures**

- Annual preparation of a financial plan by the Board of AHPGS e.V., which is presented to the General Assembly.
- Annual preparation of a financial plan by the management of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH, which is presented to the Shareholders' Meeting.

- Accounting and preparation of annual balance sheets by a tax consulting office.
- Presentation of the annual balance sheet by the management of AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH to the shareholders.
- Presentation of the annual financial statements by the Board of AHPGS e.V. to the General Meeting.
- Examination of the cash report of AHPGS e.V. by two cash auditors elected by the General Assembly.
- Discharge of the Board of AHPGS e.V. by the General Assembly.
- Regular auditing of the tax returns as well as the non-profit status of AHPGS e.V. and AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH by the responsible tax office.

## 2.6 Internal Feedback Loops

For each of the five core tasks, AHPGS has mandate holders and committees that are linked to each other in feedback loops with regard to the quality management measures.

- The assessment and accreditation procedures are handled by a responsible member of staff in the office and discussed in the group of colleagues during the process ("four eyes principle" in the processing and implementation of the procedures at the level of the office).

In assessment procedures according to the Specimen Decree, the (non-)fulfillment of the formal criteria is recorded by the AHPGS in a review report. The assessment report, consisting of a review report and an expert opinion, is made available to the higher education institution and forms the basis for the decision-making process of the German Accreditation Council. AHPGS has established processes to ensure that assessment reports are prepared in a coherent manner.

The feedback of the commissioning higher education institution and the involved experts is documented and discussed in the office, in the Board and at the general meeting.

AHPGS has a "Procedure for the settlement of objections, objections, and complaints" of the commissioning higher education institutions.

The respective procedures are documented in the procedural documents. The Board informs the general meeting in its annual work report.

- The activities of the office for the promotion of the Bologna Process are presented in the annual report to the Board and the General Assembly and discussed by them.
- The measures for the further training of staff and mandate holders are documented and discussed in staff meetings and in the Board.
- The measures taken to ensure efficient, and economically sustainable management are presented by the management to the Board and the Shareholders' Meeting and their results are discussed. They are a central subject in the work reports at the Shareholders' Meetings.

## **2.7 External Quality Assurance**

The AHPGS regularly conducts an external evaluation for the renewal of the membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the listing in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The tax returns and the non-profit status of the AHPGS e.V. and the AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH are regularly audited by the responsible tax office.

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