



FIBAA

YOUR PARTNER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Guidelines for
the Accreditation of Programmes
in Management Studies, Economics,
Law and Social Sciences
by FIBAA**

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Preface

Following the implementation of the Bologna Process and the introduction of Bachelor and Master programmes, higher education institutions were granted greater freedom in the configuration of their study programmes. The quality of the programmes – and of the acquired qualifications – has been made transparent to the public through external assessment (accreditation).

FIBAA is a European, internationally oriented agency for quality assurance and quality development in higher education. We see ourselves as a partner for Higher Education Institutions and comparable education providers. With many years of experience and our large network of experts, we accompany and support you in every step of your quality strategy. The disciplinary focus of our activities is on management studies, law, social sciences and economics.

A thorough preparation of the evaluation procedure is crucial for its effective execution. The following guidelines will facilitate your preparation by providing information on the object, the criteria and the different stages of the programme accreditation. They will furthermore offer you advice on the compilation of your self-documentation. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Your FIBAA Team

Part I: Programme Accreditation

1. Object

FIBAA accredits Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes. We conduct so-called “initial accreditations” of new or established programmes as well as “re-accreditations” of programmes that have been accredited in the past. All accreditation procedures are conducted based on FIBAA’s own quality standards (see “aspects of the quality of study programmes”), the meeting of which will lead to the awarding of the FIBAA Quality Seal.

Even if a study programme has not yet produced graduates, it will be assessed by the same criteria as an already established programme. Quality criteria which are essential for study programmes and marked (*) as so-called asterisk criteria must at least achieve the rating “Meets quality requirements”. If any of these criteria is not met, this will lead to the imposition of a respective condition upon the accreditation. Other quality criteria assessed with a “Not met” have no such condition as a consequence but may lead to a recommendation, which, however, does not compromise the accreditation. The deadline for meeting conditions is usually nine months and can, in well-founded cases, be reduced or extended (by a maximum of six months).

In the initial accreditation and re-accreditation of established programmes, the following aspects must be given particular attention:

- Evaluation of the programme’s success, e.g. through interviews with graduates and alumni-tracking studies,
- Review of the calculations of the student workload in the individual modules,
- Assessment of evaluation results and
- Assessment of the statistical data relating to enrolment rate, first-year student count, the percentage of foreign students, graduation rate, the average duration of study and the average final grade.

Additionally, experts will offer recommendations for the further development of the programme.

As part of the re-accreditation procedure, the measures taken by the HEI in order to comply with the recommendations of an earlier accreditation must be reviewed together with all major changes concerning the study programme (i.e. changes to programme content, modularisation/ECTS, staff, equipment, cooperation agreements, etc.).

It is the aim of FIBAA’s accreditation procedure to provide you with incentives and instruments for further development of your study programme through sophisticated assessment, the experts’ recommendations, internationally valid quality criteria, the opportunity of the awarding of the FIBAA Premium Seal and the compilation of results in a quality profile. The accreditation serves the creation of transparency of the study programmes’ quality for the public and ensures international comparability.

The quality of a study programme is evaluated in a peer review process. It will be examined if and in how far the FIBAA quality criteria are met in the development and implementation of a study programme. The awarding of the FIBAA Quality Seal documents the conformity of a study programme with these criteria.

2. Aspects of the quality of study programmes

The quality of study programmes is measured mainly by three aspects:

- **Content:** Does the programme possess an adequate qualification objective and are the necessary contents and competences conveyed within the programme (e.g. correspondence with the national or European qualification framework)?
- **Form:** Does the programme's formal configuration conform to the relevant standards (e.g. with regard to its admission criteria, the awarded degree, its modularisation, the calculation of its workload, design of its examinations etc.)?
- **Resources:** Are sufficient resources in the form of qualified (teaching and administrative) staff and facilities (e.g. number of rooms and student work places, equipment of seminar rooms, access to study relevant literature) available for the execution of the study programme?

FIBAA assesses the programme's quality by means of 54 quality criteria, of which 29 have been rated essential for study programmes and are marked as so-called asterisk criteria (*).

The FIBAA quality standards, in the form of questions and quality requirement, are allocated to five chapters of the so-called FIBAA Assessment Guide for Programme Accreditation referred to "Objectives", "Admission", "Contents, Structure and Didactical Concept", "Academic Environment and Framework Conditions" and "Quality Assurance and Documentation", in which the study programmes' different aspects are examined and assessed.

Each requirement is clearly defined and identified through a regularly monitored benchmark. An individual profile that clearly displays the study programme's quality is achieved by means of the orientation on prevalent quality standards.

3. FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes and FIBAA Premium Seal

3.1 FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes

For study programmes that have successfully been accredited according to FIBAA's international quality standards, the FIBAA Quality Seal for programmes is awarded. This seal internally and externally confirms the high quality of your study programme.

3.2 FIBAA Premium Seal

We are the only accreditation agency awarding a Premium Seal for established degree programmes that have demonstrated their outstanding quality in studies and teaching. The seal provides prospective students, graduates, other higher education institutions as well as employers with reliable orientation on the outstanding quality of the degree programme.

Principles for the Awarding of the FIBAA Premium Seal

FIBAA sets particular standards in all of its five core areas (“Objectives”, “Admission”, “Contents”, “Structure and Didactical Concept”, “Academic Environment and Framework Conditions” and “Quality Assurance and Documentation”) when awarding the Premium Seal to a degree programme.

The Premium Seal can only be awarded to degree programmes that are already established in the market. The Premium Seal is not conferred if the accreditation is granted with conditions. However, once the conditions have been met and the fundamental requirements have been achieved, the Premium Seal can be awarded at a later stage.

Procedure:

To start with, each evaluation criterion is assigned between 1 and 4 points (the more points scored, the better). The number of points scored for the assessment criteria is determined by the question of which of the programme’s aspects are central to the acquisition of career-related competencies. In each case, the number of points is multiplied by a defined factor, depending on the assessors’ appraisal. The weighting for the evaluation levels is defined as follows:

Excellent: 3

Exceeds the Quality Requirements: 2

Meets the Quality Requirements: 1

Fails to Meet the Quality Requirements: -2

The benchmark is set at 100%, equal to the assessment: "Exceeds the Quality Requirements". If this evaluation level does not exist for a criterion, it is set at "Meets the Quality Requirements".

To attain the Premium Seal a score of least 60% of the points must be achieved in all five core areas. The Premium Seal is awarded if, in addition to this, at least 65% of the total number of points have been scored.

If a criterion is assessed as "not relevant", it will not be considered when calculating the points needed for the awarding of the Premium Seal.

If the requirements for the Premium Seal are not achieved, although the requirements needed for an accreditation have been met, FIBAA will award its "normal" Quality Seal.

4. Procedural Steps

4.1 Admission criteria

The admission to FIBAA’s accreditation procedures can only be granted to public and state-approved institutions, and to those that are in the process of state-approval. Without state-approval of the HEI, no FIBAA accreditation procedure will be conducted.

4.2 Inquiry and contract

For initial information and in order for us to be able to provide you with a tailor-made quotation, we ask you to complete and return our [application form](#). We are then able to provide you with a non-binding quotation and discuss the desired timetable for the accreditation procedure with you. Before your application, we are happy to inform you about the content and work stages of a programme accreditation in a preparatory discussion.

4.3 Self-evaluation report

Upon the conclusion of the contract you will compose a description of all relevant aspects of the study programme. If several programmes are to be accredited in a cluster, please compile them in one self-evaluation report. The report is based on the Assessment Guide for the Accreditation of Programmes in Management Studies, Economics, Law and Social Sciences by FIBAA, which will support you in the steps of describing your study programme by providing questions to the aspects of “Objectives”, “Admission”, “Contents, Structure and Didactical Concept”, “Academic Environment and Framework Conditions” and “Quality Assurance and Documentation”. The report should not exceed 60 pages; in case of a cluster accreditation, 10 additional pages per study programme are acceptable. Please include the relevant appendices, which need to be prepared in any case in the framework of planning and implementing the study programme (e.g. regulations and module descriptions). Furthermore, please include information on results of previous accreditation/evaluation procedures from the last two years as we may consider them in our accreditation procedure.

As soon as you have submitted your self-evaluation report, we will name a FIBAA project manager as your contact and begin the evaluation procedure. In a first step, your self-evaluation report will be checked for completeness (see checklist p. 16). In case of missing documents or information we will let you know in good time and ask you to submit these.

Peer-Review process

The assessment of study programmes follows along the lines of the Peer-Review process: Competent reviewers discuss the study programme’s relevant aspects based on written information/documentation with representatives of the HEI in a constructive-critical dialogue. The expert panel then compiles an assessment report based on the results which includes a recommendation for the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes as decision-making body.

4.4 Date for On-Site Visit

You and your FIBAA project manager will agree a date for the expert panel’s on-site visit. In urgent cases the on-site visit may take place prior to the submission of the self-evaluation report. Please contact the project leader for programme accreditation as early as possible to find an arrangement on this matter.

Please note that, upon prior agreement, four to six months can lie between the submission of your self-evaluation report and the decision through the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes (F-AC PROG). The F-AC PROG meets four times a year. Please check our [Homepage](#) for the specific dates.

In order to assure a quick and smooth procedure, please let us know in good time (upon conclusion of the contract) which of the F-AC PROG meetings you envisage. We will then be able to develop a schedule and to have all relevant resources available.

4.5 Appointment of the review panel

After the agreement on possible dates for the on-site visit, FIBAA will appoint the review panel and confirm the on-site visit. We will inform you on the compilation of the review panel in good time before the visit. In case of any impediments from your side (e.g. possible partiality), the panel will be adequately modified. The final decision on the compilation of the review panel lies with FIBAA.

Review Panel

The compilation of the review panel should ensure the experts' evaluation of all areas relevant for the accreditation procedure (e.g. subject-specific aspects, structural and formal aspects, social aspects). Members of the review panel especially include experts from the field of academia, students and experts from professional practice.

A FIBAA review panel consists of at least five people, including:

- Two experts from the field of academia, one of which a university professor and one a professor of a university of applied sciences,
- One expert from professional practice,
- One country expert who is familiar with the respective national Higher Education Area and
- One student member.

For the accreditation of a distance learning programme the expert panel will be complemented by an expert for distance learning; for the accreditation of a cooperative programme an expert for cooperative studying will be called in.

FIBAA experts receive regular training and are called in as experts by FIBAA only after a trial period. FIBAA has a pool of experts at its disposal made up of approximately 750 proven international experts in their respective fields, from professional practice and the student body.

4.6 Assessment of the self-evaluation report

As soon as we receive your confirmation on the expert panel, the experts receive the programme's self-evaluation report for assessment. Should they require additional information, we will forward their requests to you in good time.

4.7 On-Site Visit

The on-site visit through the expert panel is usually conducted no sooner than eight weeks after the submission of your self-documentation. The experts will separately interview the representatives of the HEI, e.g. the management, teaching staff and students of the programmes, but also administrative staff and in some cases graduates as well as representatives of cooperating institutions and companies. It should be generally ensured that different interlocutors are chosen for the individual interviews and that possible doubling in the interviews through candidates holding more than one function is avoided. The on-site visit usually takes 2 days, it may take longer if more than one study programme is assessed, and it ends with a first feedback by the experts concerning the conformity of the study programme with the relevant requirements.

The time schedule and the compilation of the meetings depend on various factors, such as the programme's profile or the interlocutors' availability, and are agreed upon by your FIBAA

project manager together with you. Concerning the choice of student representatives, it is to be ensured that they are not employed by the university in any way (e.g. as tutor or student employer).

Example of a time schedule for an on-site visit

1st Day:	
Until 9:00	Transfer to HEI
9:00 – 10:00 (Room)	<p>Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the FIBAA Team - Introduction of the HEI <p><i>Short presentation (approx. 15 mins) on the structure, classification and goals of the study programmes at hand in the overall structure and strategy of the HEI, or the associated faculty, possibly including a following discussion.</i></p>
10:00 – 12:00 (Room)	Internal panel deliberation including insight of given materials (teaching and learning materials, examinations results, final theses, etc.)
12:00 – 13:00 (Room)	lunch/snack
13:00 – 15:30 (Room)	<p>Panel interview with the programme management of the programmes (no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics: Goals and position of the programme in regard to labour and educational market, internationality, curriculum (structure and content, employability), examination frequency and organisation, teaching and learning, support of students, programme administration, research, specifics of the PhD</i></p>
15:30 – 15:45	Break
15:45 – 17:30 (Room)	<p>Panel interview with lecturers (full-time and part-time lecturers, two lecturers from each programme, one interview with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics: Support of students, teaching content, didactics/methods, involvement in decision making, staff education and qualification, internal cooperation and exchange/commutation</i></p>
17:30 – 19:00	Internal panel deliberation
19.00	Transfer to the hotel

2nd Day:	
Until 9:00	Transfer to HEI
9.00 – 9:30 (Room)	Internal panel deliberation (if necessary insight of given materials)
9:30 – 10:30 (Room)	<p>Panel interview with students and graduates (one student and one graduate per programme, one interview with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i> <i>Study structure, study process, study content, consultation and support for students, examination organization, potentially internships, terms abroad, field trips, working conditions, administration support, workload, involvement in decision making, evaluations)</i></p>
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:45 (Room) -	<p>Panel interview with the administration staff (one interview with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support of students - programme organisation - career consulting - alumni activities - issues on internationality - financing - quality management
11:45 – 12:30	<p>Round tour through/inspection of building <i>(seminar rooms, computer cluster, library etc.)</i></p>
12.30 – 13:30 (Room)	lunch/snack
13.30 -15.30 (Room)	Internal panel deliberation
15.30 - 16.00 (Room)	<p>Final review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resume/summary on the impressions left by the visit</i> • <i>Next line of action</i>
Approx. 16.00	End of on-site visit

4.8 Assessment Report

Based on the self-evaluation report and on further information if necessary, as well as on the insights gained during the on-site visit, the expert panel will draft an assessment report.

The structure of the report follows the structure of the Assessment Guide. The report includes the experts' evaluation of the conformity of the programme's essential features with relevant standards and requirements as well as a decision recommendation for the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes (F-AC PROG). A copy of the report will be forwarded to you for a statement, excluding the decision recommendation. Should the expert panel recommend a suspension of the procedure (see results of the procedure), you will receive the complete assessment report, including the decision recommendation.

4.9 Decision-making and result of the procedure

F-AC PROG discusses the assessment result (report) and decides on the programme accreditation, taking your statement into consideration. F-AC PROG meets approx. four times a year; the specific dates are published on our [homepage](#). F-AC PROG may decide on:

- Accreditation
- Accreditation with conditions
- Refusal of Accreditation

In the case of a *positive* result (without conditions) of the procedure, the study programme receives accreditation for 5 years (in case of an initial accreditation/ concept accreditation) or 7 years (in case of re-accreditation).

Even if a study programme has not yet produced graduates, it will be assessed by the same criteria as an already established programme. Quality criteria which are essential for study programmes and marked (*) as so-called asterisk criteria, must at least achieve the rating "Meets quality requirements". If any of these criteria is not met, this will lead to the imposition of a respective condition upon the accreditation. Other quality criteria assessed with a "Not met" have no such condition as a consequence but may lead to a recommendation, which, however, does not compromise the accreditation. The deadline for meeting conditions is usually nine months and can, in well-founded cases, be reduced or extended (by a maximum of six months).

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded if a maximum of seven asterisk criteria has not been met and only if at least criteria 1.1 and 3.1.1 are both met (conditions may never be imposed on these two criteria). If more than seven asterisk criteria are not met or if at least one of criteria 1.1 and 3.1.1 is not met, the accreditation will be refused and a new accreditation can be applied for only after a blocking period of one year.

Established programmes which have already produced graduates and which have received extraordinary results in study and teaching that considerably exceed FIBAA's quality criteria will be awarded the FIBAA Premium Seal. It provides prospective students, graduates, other higher education institutions as well as employers with reliable orientation on the outstanding quality of the degree programme.

For study programmes which have successfully been accredited without or with conditions, the FIBAA Quality Seal will be awarded, in the latter case listing the conditions.

FIBAA subsequently hands out the assessment report and the accreditation certificate to the HEI. The complete assessment report will be published on FIBAA's website and in EQAR's Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR1).

4.10 Fulfillment and proof of fulfillment of conditions, where applicable

The meeting of the condition is to be proven within the deadline. The submission of the relevant documents (e.g. modified admission regulation) usually suffices (see guidelines for meeting of conditions). The documents, including a statement by the expert panel, are submitted to F-AC PROG for confirmation of the fulfilled conditions and discussed in the subsequent F-AC meeting. In the case of exclusively formal conditions (e.g. pending approval of examination regulation), FIBAA will attend to the documents without the consultation of the expert panel. If F-AC PROG regards the conditions as having been met, this decision will be stated in a report and the accreditation certificate and the assessment report will be modified accordingly.

In the event that the university is not able to prove that it has met the conditions within the given deadline, an application for a one-off deadline extension (3 months max.) is possible in reasonable cases. If the conditions are not met within the deadline or the extended deadline, the accreditation of the study programme will be withdrawn.

1 <https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/>

Option to appeal:

We generally propose that you approach us directly in case of problems during the accreditation process. Solutions can usually be found during the further course of the procedure and misunderstandings can often be clarified. Within the framework of your statement to the assessment report, you are given the opportunity to point out aspects that, from your point of view, are not represented or assessed correctly. Prior to F-AC PROG's decision-making, the expert panel engages with the criticised aspects anew and may change the report accordingly.

If you feel that the assessment report and the recommendations given therein are still not appropriately deduced, there is furthermore the option of lodging a reasoned appeal to FIBAA within a period of one month after written notification of the decision. In this case, F-AC PROG – after a statement by the experts – will attend to the programme and to the HEI's statements anew. Should the committee agree with the HEI's arguments for complaint, the accreditation decision may be changed directly. If no agreement is found, the FIBAA Appeal Committee will be asked to examine in detail the accreditation procedure, its results and the complaints brought forward by the institution and to submit a well-founded recommendation to F-AC PROG ("appeal procedure"). Based on this recommendation F-AC PROG will again discuss the accreditation decision in a subsequent meeting and come to a concluding decision.

Overview of the procedural steps of a programme accreditation

→ Higher Education Institution (HEI)	FIBAA ←
Contact FIBAA	
Preparatory meeting between HEI and FIBAA if necessary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of completed application form to FIBAA 	
Calculation of procedural costs and preparation of offer	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract conclusion Drafting of self-evaluation report Date proposal for on-site visit 	
Compiling of expert panel; Appointment and planning of on-site visit; Possibly request for further information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of on-site visit's organisation (internally and with FIBAA) 	
Experts' on-site visit at HEI	
Submission of assessment report draft without decision recommendation to the institution for statement.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of HEI 	
Consideration of HEI's statement by expert panel; Completion of assessment report	
Decision-making by FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes	
Submission of assessment report and in some cases of accreditation certificate, including a list of conditions and deadlines for meeting the conditions where applicable; Publishing of assessment report on FIBAA's website and in DEQAR	

Part II: The Self-Evaluation Report

1. Basic principles

The self-evaluation report serves as a basis for the experts to assess the study programme; it is therefore of fundamental importance for the accreditation's success. Experience shows that sufficient time should be scheduled for the compilation of the self-evaluation report – a report that has been compiled “on the final leg” may include inconsistencies, not all relevant people may be acquainted with it, or it may not be coordinated sufficiently with other places. A first recommendation for the compilation of the self-evaluation report is therefore:

Start in good time.

The accreditation system is “alive“: On the basis of the players' experiences in the system and against the background of national and international developments, the standards and requirements are constantly evolving. Standards that were in place for the first accreditation of a study programme five years ago may meanwhile have changed. In some cases, what used to be “only” important may now be crucial for success. Therefore:

Check for the latest regulations.

In a peer review process the assessment is usually performed by external experts (so-called “external quality assurance”). They are appointed in order to look at the matters with a “view from the outside” and to arrive at an unbiased assessment. The experts are therefore naturally not familiar with internal matters, which should be considered when compiling the self-evaluation report. Therefore another recommendation is:

Do not presuppose institution-specific knowledge.

The self-evaluation report gives a first impression of the programme's quality. It intends to describe relevant aspects and to offer answers; it may, however, also raise new questions. The more consistent the descriptions, the easier it is to understand the self-evaluation report. Predications should always be conclusive from previously given information. For a good self-evaluation report you should therefore:

Offer consistent information.

Please attach all relevant appendices, such as regulations, contracts etc. (see Checklist [Appendices to Self-Report of the HEI](#)) to the self-evaluation report. In case of missing attachments, we will remind you to submit them. During the compilation of the self-evaluation report please note that you will be expected to:

Prove essential information.

It is important to FIBAA to balance income and expenses of an accreditation procedure. This should be reflected in the self-evaluation report. Precise information regarding the essential facts as well as, if necessary, references to relevant attachments, which in any case need to be prepared for planning and implementing the study programme, are recommended. The Assessment Guide steers you through the individual topics and it illustrates the information that really matters for the assessment of the quality standards. The self-evaluation report should not exceed 60 pages (excluding appendices). A last principle is therefore:

Focus on essential facts.

2. Checklist Programme Accreditation

Completed?

Self-affirmation

- The formal configuration of the study programme conforms to the relevant regulations in their CURRENT version
- The configuration of the content of the study programme conforms to the relevant regulations in their CURRENT version

Self-evaluation report:

On the basis of FIBAA's Assessment Guide, the following aspects are to be elaborated on:

- Objectives
- Admission
- Contents, Structure and Didactical Concept
- Academic Environment and Framework Conditions
- Quality Assurance and Documentation

Appendices to Self-Report:

- Organigram (chapter 0.1)
- Statistical Data (chapter 0.2) (see sample document of FIBAA*)
- Regulations for admission (if this is not integrated in the study and examination regulations) (chapter 2)
- Curriculum overview/ course timetable (chapter 3.1/3.2) (see sample document of FIBAA*)
- Module descriptions/ syllabi (chapter 3.1/3.2) (see sample document of FIBAA*)
- Study and examination regulations incl. regulations on credit transfer and recognition (chapter 3.2)
- Diploma Supplement (chapter 3.2)
- Learning Agreement, where applicable (chapter 3.2) (exemplary)
- Regulations for practical training/ internship, where applicable (chapter 3.2)
- Curriculum vitae of lecturers (full-time and part-time) (see sample document of FIBAA*) (chapter 4.1)
- Cooperation agreements related to the study programme, where applicable (chapter 4.3)
- Regulations of Quality management (chapter 5)
- Evaluation sheets/ survey examples (chapter 5)

* Sample documents can be downloaded from FIBAA's website: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/procedures-at-programme-level/prog-according-to-fibaa-quality-standards/fibaa0841.html>.

Preparation for On-Site Visit

Suggestions for date of on-site visit

- Internal agreement
- Agreement with FIBAA

General organisational matters

- Advise HEI members of the accreditation procedure in good time
- Book rooms in a hotel in the HEI's vicinity
- Book a table for the experts' dinner in a restaurant
- Organise snacks for experts (on two days)
- Organise catering/drinks for the interviews
- Set up wi-fi account for experts

Time management

- Agree on schedule for on-site visit (start and duration of meetings) with FIBAA

Rooms for on-site visit

- Book adequate conference room within the institution (to seat 15 min.)
- Signpost the building/room if necessary

Interlocutors

- Agree on the compilation of the interviews with FIBAA
- Inform participants
- Create name tags/plates for experts and interlocutors

Documents on site

- Study- and teaching material (selection)
- Exams and final examinations (incl. assessment/evaluation and good, mediocre and bad examinations for each)
- Internship reports, if applicable (6-8 for each study programme, incl. assessment/evaluation, differently graded reports)
- Case studies (exemplary for the study programme)
- Information leaflets (for the study programme)
- Activity/annual report
- Information folder for students of study programmes with block teaching accompanying their employment, if existent
- Evaluation assessment (results from the previous 2-3 years)

3. Frequently asked Questions (FAQ)

Please find below answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the following topics:

I- General information on the accreditation of study programmes

II- Self-evaluation report

III- Peer-review processes and on-site visit

IV- Decisions of the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes (F-AC PROG) and their consequences

I- General information on the accreditation of study programmes

How long does a programme accreditation procedure take?

A programme accreditation generally takes 6 months from submission of the self-evaluation report by the institution to a decision taken by the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes (F-AC PROG). Upon the conclusion of the contract, FIBAA will contact you in order to agree on a schedule together.

II- Self-evaluation report

How should we produce our self-evaluation report?

The self-evaluation report should be produced based on the FIBAA Assessment Guide. This document includes all the relevant quality standards in the form of questions and definitions of the benchmarks.

By when should the self-evaluation report be submitted to FIBAA?

Self-evaluation reports should be submitted to FIBAA at the latest one year after conclusion of the contract.

How many copies of the self-evaluation report should a HEI send to FIBAA?

FIBAA needs one self-evaluation report in electronic form (via e-mail, download link etc.).

What happens after the university has submitted its self-evaluation report?

After submitting the documentation, FIBAA will appoint a Project Manager, who will assume responsibility for the coordination of the procedure and be your contact person throughout the process. The project manager will arrange a date for the on-site visit in agreement with the HEI.

The FIBAA Expert Management Division will appoint a Review Panel.

After the self-evaluation report has been checked for completeness by FIBAA, the review panel will check it for consistency, plausibility and conformity with the FIBAA Quality standards and international Guidelines and Targets. After this has been completed, the on-site visit can take place.

III- Peer-review process and on-site visit

How are the experts chosen?

The assessment of study programmes follows along the lines of the "Peer-Review" process proven in the academic field: Independent experts are selected in accordance with disciplinary criteria check and assess the objective facts and circumstances with the university as equals. FIBAA's strict system of criteria hereby assures unbiased and comprehensible expertise at all times.

The expert panel is generally made up of at least five persons, two from the field of science (one professor of a university and one professor of a university of applied sciences), one from the field of professional practice (corporate or industry representatives), one country expert who is familiar with the respective national Higher Education Area, and a student member. FIBAA maintains a pool of more than 750 proven experts in their respective fields.

FIBAA sets a series of requirements for the appointing of experts. To qualify as an expert, it is absolutely essential that an adequate understanding and knowledge of evaluation and accreditation processes are assured. This is why FIBAA regularly offers training courses and seminars for its experts that extend far beyond the statutory requirements.

The university is advised of who the members of a reviewer panel are in good time. To ensure that the reviewer panel is unbiased, FIBAA will give the university the opportunity to submit any reasonable appeal. The university has neither nomination rights nor veto rights.

How is the on-site visit organised?

The site visit generally takes 2 days, depending on the number of programmes to be accredited. The review panel gains a comprehensive overview of the study programme and the contribution of all involved by carrying out numerous interviews with the university executive, the teaching/academic staff, the students, graduates as well as administrative staff.

IV- Decisions of FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes (F-AC PROG) and their Consequences

When does F-AC PROG meet?

F-AC PROG meets about four times a year at intervals of approx. three months. The dates for meetings of the F-AC PROG can be found on [FIBAA's website](#). We usually agree on the envisaged meeting for F-AC PROG's discussion of your procedure upon submission of your self-evaluation report.

To which decisions can F-AC PROG come?

F-AC PROG can either decide to:

- Accredite the Degree Programme,

- Accredite the Degree Programme with (max. 7) conditions (if a maximum of seven asterisk criteria has not been met and only if at least criteria 1.1 “Objectives of the study programme” and 3.1.1 “Logic and conceptual coherence” are both met) or
- Refuse the Accreditation (If more than seven asterisk criteria are not met and/or if at least one of criteria 1.1 and 3.1.1 is not met).

Before F-AC PROG makes its decision, the university will receive the Assessment Report draft, excluding the experts’ decision recommendation, for a statement. All decisions taken by F-AC PROG take the HEI’s statement into consideration.

How long are study programmes accredited for?

For Initial/ Concept Accreditation: 5 years.

For Re-Accreditation: 7 years.

If F-AC PROG decides to accredit the study programme subject to conditions, the accreditation duration can be shortened.

What happens after a positive accreditation decision?

After a positive accreditation decision according to FIBAA’s quality standards the HEI receives the FIBAA Quality Seal for accredited programmes.

The accreditation results, the names of the participating experts and the assessment report (under observance of all legal conditions for data protection) are published on FIBAA’s Homepage (→ [accredited study programmes](#)) and in EQAR’s Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR).

What happens in the event of a negative accreditation decision?

If FIBAA refuses an accreditation of a study programme, the new accreditation can only be applied for after a blocking period of generally one year.

What happens in the event of an accreditation with conditions?

The university must prove that it has met the given condition(s) within a deadline of 9 months. Please consider the guidelines for the meeting of conditions in the process, which we will be glad to forward to you upon request after F-AC PROG’s decision.

The proof submitted by the university is checked immediately by the review panel or by FIBAA (in the case of formal conditions). Based on the expert panel’s/ FIBAA’s recommendations, F-AC PROG will decide whether the conditions have been met.

If the HEI is not able to prove that it has met the condition(s) within the given deadline, it can, in reasonable cases, apply for a one-off deadline extension (6 months max.). Otherwise, FIBAA will, after a notice and an appropriate additional respite, be required to withdraw the study programme’s accreditation.

What happens if the HEI does not agree with the decision of the F-AC PROG?

Each decision taken by the F-AC PROG will be communicated to the university with immediate effect. As from this point, the university will have 1 month to lodge a written and substantiated appeal to FIBAA.

The university's appeal is initially checked by the FIBAA Appeals Committee. This committee then recommends the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes. If F-AC PROG allows the appeal, the case will be submitted to the FIBAA Appeal Committee for examination.

F-AC PROG will make the final decision.

Further information on the appeal procedure can be found on page 13.

When does FIBAA award its Premium Seal?

FIBAA awards the FIBAA-Premium-Seal to universities offering study programmes which have already established themselves in the market and which have proven the excellent quality of their studies and teaching within the scope of an accreditation process according to the international quality standards of FIBAA.

This award confirms that a study programme as a whole clearly has an outstanding quality. It provides potential students, students, graduates, universities and the employment market with reliable orientation regarding the quality of the degree programme.

Further information on the principles for the awarding of the FIBAA Premium Seal can be found on page 6.

Is the HEI allowed to make any changes to a previously accredited study programme?

Changes to the study programme are possible, sometimes even desirable, in the course of continuous improvement and updating. If these changes are substantial (e.g. new location, new content, new structure, new opportunity for specialisation) and if they affect the programme's conceptual design or profile, the university is obliged to report this to FIBAA in order for us to check whether these changes may affect the programme's quality and thus need to be assessed anew.

FIBAA then decides whether the procedure may be shortened and whether it may be conducted via conference call or if an evaluation on the basis of written documents is possible. If you are unsure, it is always recommendable to contact FIBAA to inquire whether it is necessary to report a change. We are happy to advise you.

Can the accreditation be revoked? If yes, in which cases?

In certain situations, FIBAA considers it as its duty to revoke the accreditation. This is the case when,

- The HEI fails to meet the deadline set for redressing the conditions;
- The HEI fails to advise the accreditation agency of any reportable changes, although these substantially affect the basis of the original accreditation.

Please contact us for further information:

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