

Application for Observer Status in the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

Submitting agency: Foundation for International Business
Administration Accreditation (FIBAA)

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Criteria Requirements for Observer member

1. Criterion: Nature of the operations of the agency

Founded in 1994 by the German, Swiss and Austrian industry and employers' associations, the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) has been a partner for excellence in higher education for more than 24 years. It has successfully completed over 800 accreditation procedures and offers a broad portfolio of programme-level and institutional accreditations in higher education as well as certification of continuing education courses. FIBAA boasts a unique profile of specialising in management, economics, law and the social sciences in programme-level procedures, while conducting institutional accreditation procedures in higher education institutions of any kind. FIBAA offers nationally recognised accreditation seals in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Kazakhstan, and globally awards its own FIBAA Quality Seal. FIBAA's operations are fully compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). FIBAA is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

FIBAA's past and current business activities span over 50 countries on 4 different continents. Approximately 60 higher education institutions are currently under contact, ranging from leading business and law schools to universities of applied sciences, research universities and continuing education providers. FIBAA has high customer retention rates, with approximately 75 per cent of its customers choosing FIBAA for subsequent accreditations. Since 2008, the agency has awarded 40+ FIBAA Premium Seals for outstanding performance in accreditation procedures.

FIBAA benefits from a pool of 700+ experts featuring professors, senior business practitioners and students, who all have strong accreditation expertise in both FIBAA's core disciplines and quality assurance and enhancement. Expertise gained by FIBAA is being shared in consultancy workshops, in-house trainings and evaluations.

References

FIBAA's general website in English: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/welcome-page/>

FIBAA's general website in Russian: <http://www.fibaa.org/nc/ru/start/>

2. Criterion: Mission statement and objectives

FIBAA's Mission and Vision

FIBAA is a nationally as well as internationally experienced agency for quality assurance. Customer-oriented, efficient, fast and flexible work are some of its trademarks. It awards the Seal of the German Accreditation Council according to the Council's

standards. FIBAA awards its Quality Seal to higher education institutions and programmes of high quality worldwide. Excellent performances, especially those that demonstrate a strong strategy-based and international profile, receive the FIBAA Premium Seal.

The task of quality assurance lies within the responsibility of higher education institutions. FIBAA supports them in achieving their self-defined objectives. It offers impulses for further quality development. It promotes quality and transparency in academic education by assessing Higher Education Institutions, Business Schools, study programmes and further study offers nationally and internationally based on international standards and regulations and by means of documenting and publishing the results.

FIBAA's procedures on institutional level (system accreditation, institutional accreditation) are interdisciplinary; they are directed at all HEIs and other education providers. In the realm of programme accreditation procedures and certification procedures of academic continuing education courses FIBAA places particular emphasis on programmes in law, social and economic sciences as well as management qualification. As FIBAA's advisory unit, FIBAA Consult supports higher education institutions and assists them in the development and implementation of their quality oriented strategies. FIBAA Consult conducts evaluation procedures according to individual objectives of higher education institutions and other academic institutions and offers workshops and seminars on current issues.

FIBAA bases its work on national and international requirements and standards. Particular attention is given to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) as well as to the promotion of practical relevance and employability.

Our experienced committee members, experts and employers possess comprehensive know-how in all questions of quality assurance and quality management. The results of their work are of benefit to the higher education institutions and other education providers, to students, prospective students, graduates, employers and other interested parties alike.

FIBAA's close ties to science and economy, praxis orientation and internationality are reflected in the compilation of its foundation board and committees that decide on the requirements and the results of accreditation procedures, as well as in the expert panels. FIBAA meets the respective constitutional requirements.

FIBAA is a non-profit organisation. It is approved by the Accreditation Council and enlisted in the European register EQAR. Active membership with ENQA, EUA, CEENQA and INQAAHE, amongst others, document its international networks. Furthermore, as an official agency for quality assurance, FIBAA is officially recognised in the Netherlands, in Austria, in Switzerland, and in Kazakhstan. FIBAA holds cooperation agreements with foreign agencies of quality assurance in Australia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Poland and Russia.

All persons linked to FIBAA (committee members, experts, employers etc.) are committed to equal opportunities and do not discriminate against anyone, neither explicitly nor implicitly, and in particular not on the basis of ethnicity, religion, conviction, disability, age, sexual identity or sex.

Transparency

"Transparency creates trust" was FIBAA's motto right from the start. FIBAA achieves high levels of transparency by examining on the basis of clearly defined quality criteria and keeps the HEIs well informed along every procedural step. In order to be able to create transparency and comparability in the education market, FIBAA publishes evaluation reports, including their Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis, in the Quality Profile on its website after each completed process.

Flexibility, Efficiency and Short Procedures

FIBAA endeavors to keep its procedural steps as lean and efficient as possible. These are designed to keep the length of a process down to a minimum. From submitting the self-documentation file up to the accreditation or certification decision, a program accreditation or a certification will last between 4 and 6 months on average, while institutional accreditation procedures will last 9 months. To improve the coordination and collaboration, the process is always agreed with the HEI in question.

Internationality

A key goal of the Bologna Process and of the multi-cycle degree system this brought with it is to facilitate the cross-border comparability of degrees and create greater mobility for students and graduates. To achieve this goal, FIBAA takes into consideration international guidelines and standards. FIBAA facilitates international exchange in the field of quality assurance in higher education through its membership of international bodies.

Strategic Outlook

FIBAA has expanded its activities in recent years: alongside numerous programme-level accreditation procedures it has conducted several institutional accreditation procedures in Germany and beyond. Moreover, it has also expand its consultancy activities.

In addition, FIBAA is constantly reacting to changes and further developments in the area of quality assurance, quality assurance and higher education, and adjusts its strategic position accordingly. This relates, above all, to aspects such as

- The trend towards institutional accreditation in Germany and abroad.
- The latest regulatory changes in the German Accreditation System.
- The rising popularity of seals of an agency is to higher education institutions

for reasons including reputation and attractiveness.

- The constant demand of employability as a key feature in higher education and accreditation.

- The opportunities and challenges entailed by digitalisation of higher education and the economy.

FIBAA will continue to develop into an even more diverse international non-profit organisation with a global perspective. Concomitantly, it provides the necessary resources.

FIBAA's expert pool is being expanded accordingly. In the area of programme-level accreditation, FIBAA maintains its profile of subject-specific experts both in Germany and abroad.

In terms of market development, FIBAA seeks to maintain its strong role in its domestic markets Germany, Switzerland and Austria. It will further increase its presence in Europe (especially Eastern Europe), Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. FIBAA has lately initiated promising first steps into the Asian-Pacific sphere. As demonstrated by many joint projects, FIBAA reaches out to agencies and higher education stakeholders across the globe, but firmly advances its strategic markets.

Through workshops and publications, FIBAA will also actively focus on consultancy in the field quality assurance and quality enhancement, effective training measures for experts and continuous improvement of its own data basis and tools.

FIBAA is convinced of the increasing significance of consultancy for higher education institutions. Firstly, this relates to higher education institutions seeking to obtain institutional accreditation with another agency, but searching for additional external advice. Secondly, this relates to the individual problems of higher education institutions for which FIBAA offers customised consultancy services. FIBAA will increase its focus on both areas in future.

References

FIBAA's Approach and Strengths: <http://www.fibaa.org/fibaa/?L=1>

FIBAA's International Recognitions: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/fibaa0540/>

FIBAA's International Network: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/fibaa0404/>

3. Criterion: Agency staff, Numbers, Profile, Roles

The staff body in FIBAA's head office in Bonn, Germany is composed as follows (as of February 2018): FIBAA's head office is managed by a Chief Executive Office. There are four additional functional areas, (1) the office together with IT and Finance, (2) Project Management, (3) Markets & Acquisition and Expert Management as well as (4) FIBAA Consult.

There are seven employees in total in the area Office, IT and Finance (5.00 FTE). In the area of Project Management there are thirteen employees (10.0 FTE), in Markets & Acquisitions and Expert Management there are two employees (1.5 FTE), and in FIBAA Consult there is one employee (1.0 FTE). Four external project managers (one also as a special representative of FIBAA) are employed as freelancers for FIBAA and can be deployed flexibly. This ensures that around 80 procedures per year can be processed promptly and punctually. All employees possess the appropriate qualifications for their areas of responsibility.

The service areas (namely national programme-level accreditation and certification, institutional accreditation in German-speaking countries, international accreditation and certification, Markets & Acquisition and Expert Management and FIBAA Consult are

coordinated by division managers, who are responsible for coordinating and further developing these areas.

FIBAA employees regularly receive training opportunities (in recent years, for example, this has included training courses on negotiation techniques, time management, quality management and intercultural sensitivity) and have the opportunity to attend FIBAA Consult workshops. In addition, individual training measures can be arranged (e.g. advanced English classes).

References

FIBAA's Head Office: <http://www.fibaa.org/nc/en/fibaa/our-team/>

4. Criterion: Profile of reviewers

All external quality assurance procedures by FIBAA are conducted in peer review procedures, i.e. with the participation of external experts including academic representatives, representatives of professional practice (i.e. business practitioners) and students.

Experts are always (incl. unsolicited application and advertisement) initially appointed on a probationary basis. Appointment is upon the recommendation of the relevant division manager for programme-level and institutional accreditation and certification and, finally, by the management. If both parties are satisfied following the expert's initial assignments, the experts are recommended for appointment by the respective FIBAA accreditation or certification committee. The recommendation for the composition of the expert teams for the respective quality assurance procedures is made centrally by the employee responsible for expert team composition in the Expert Management Division. Once experts have been appointed, this person prepares an expert team sheet, which is submitted to the responsible FIBAA Panel Appointing Committee for approval and then to the higher education institution for confirmation.

Criteria for expert appointment

Criteria for FIBAA Experts in Programme Accreditation and Certification

Representatives from higher education

The profile for FIBAA Experts from HEIs is based on fundamental academic competence in the academic discipline(s) in question (at FIBAA largely management, economics, social sciences and law). These FIBAA Experts have several years of teaching and research experience at Higher Education Institutions. This experience is ideally proven by:

- active role in the respective scientific community
- reputation and a broad range of academic competence

For certification procedures the FIBAA Experts also need to have experience with academic continuing education courses.

Other desirable qualifications include, e.g.

- experience in accreditation or evaluation procedures
- open-mindedness towards developments of the Bologna Process

- contacts with businesses and/or experience in cooperating with businesses (in the fields of research or consulting)
- industry experience gained in business enterprises or
- legal or commercial consulting organisations
- international experience
- English language proficiency.

Representatives from business practice

The profile for FIBAA Experts from business practice is essentially based on management and leadership experience, here specifically defined as experience in managing human resources, organisations, budgets and/or processes.

This experience is ideally proven by:

- experience in entrepreneurial and operational functions
- personnel responsibility for more than five employees
- budget responsibility, ideally including profit responsibility
- relevant experience in hiring and/or placing staff in a business
- English language proficiency

For lawyers, these criteria apply by analogy to legal advisory work in companies and comparable organisations or in a liberal profession. This experience is proven by:

- experience in the strategic and operational development of legal relations, e.g. in law firms, legal or HR departments of large and medium-sized companies
- self-employed work as a lawyer or notary public
- exercise of (predominantly legal) leadership functions in public administrations

Further desirable qualifications include, e.g.

- contact with Higher or Further Education Institutions and/or experience in cooperating with them (in the field of research or in the recruitment of staff)
- ideally experience in the implementation or management of quality processes

Student representatives

The profile of FIBAA Experts from the student body essentially requires enrolment in a study programme in the respective discipline. Furthermore, FIBAA Experts representing the student body must be or have been actively engaged as student representatives in e.g. the student council or institutional committees.

Other desirable qualifications include, e.g.

- open-mindedness towards developments of the Bologna Process
- contact with businesses and/or experience in cooperating with them
- international experience
- English language proficiency

Criteria for FIBAA Experts in Institutional Procedures

Representatives from higher education

The profile for FIBAA Experts from HEIs is based largely on academic competence and experience in the leadership and management of Higher and Further Education Institutions.

These FIBAA Experts have to meet in particular the following criteria:

- experience in the field of steering and managing and Institution
- experience in the field of internal quality management at HEIs
- experience the field of curricular design
- English language proficiency

For the Institutional Strategic Management Accreditation the FIBAA Experts need to have knowledge of strategic analysis (i.e. Balance Score Card, etc.).

Representatives from business practice

The profile for FIBAA Experts representing business practice is essentially based on experience in regard to the implementation of quality management systems in professional environments. Additionally, they have several years of management experience in business.

This experience is ideally proven by:

- experience in entrepreneurial and operational functions
- personnel responsibility for more than five employees
- budget responsibility, ideally including profit responsibility
- relevant experience in hiring and/or placing staff in a business
- English language proficiency

Other desirable qualifications are for example:

- experience in certification procedures (such as ISO, TQM, etc.)
- international experience
- English language proficiency

Student representatives

The profile for FIBAA Experts from the student body essentially requires enrolment in a study programme in the respective discipline. Furthermore, FIBAA Experts representing the student body must be or have been actively engaged as student representatives in e.g. the student council or institutional committees. In institutional procedures it is particularly important that student representatives have a proven record of experience in accreditation procedures.

Other desirable qualifications include, e.g.

- open-mindedness towards developments of the Bologna Process
- contact with businesses and/or experience in cooperating with them
- international experience
- English language proficiency

Criteria for commissioning experts in evaluation procedures by FIBAA Consult

As a general rule, FIBAA Consult involves academic representatives, representatives of professional practice and students in evaluation procedures. The concrete composition of the team varies depending on the objectives of the evaluation. The criteria for the experts in the three status groups correspond to those in programme-level and institutional procedures and are published on FIBAA Consult's website.

Confidentiality and Impartiality

Before the first assignment, FIBAA advises its experts of the duty to keep any information confidential which one obtains in the course of a procedure. Before receiving any documentation of the Higher or Further Education Institution, one is required to fill in and sign the Declaration of Confidentiality, and submit it to FIBAA.

At the start of each procedure, FIBAA asks to declare the experts' impartiality by submitting the Declaration of Impartiality. Partiality exists if:

- one is employed by the applicant Institution or were employed during the past five years,
- a doctoral or habilitation project or an appeals procedure is pending at the applicant Institution or has taken place at the Institution during the past five years,
- one was enrolled as a student at the applicant Institution during the past three years,
- one has participated in joint research/consulting projects or other intensive cooperation projects in the past three years,
- one's department has been audited by employees of the applicant Institution during the past three years,
- the procedure otherwise affects one's own matters or interests of one's spouse or partner, one's parents, children, siblings or another person represented by the expert by law or power of attorney,
- the expert or his/her institution maintain close business ties with the institution under review, or are institutionally intertwined.

FIBAA's impartiality policy is informed by the Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

If the applicant Institution offers the expert a position or future cooperation in teaching or research in the course of the accreditation or certification procedure, the expert is urged to notify FIBAA instantly.

Further training of experts

In order to perform the role of an expert, knowledge of the ESG, the rules of the German Accreditation Council and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German federal States and all other accreditation/certification criteria applicable to FIBAA and the procedure is an essential requirement. FIBAA therefore offers online training and regular face-to-face seminars for experts. Information and dates

can be found on FIBAA's homepage and are regularly advertised to the experts via mail or newsletter.

Online training courses are explicitly directed at new experts and those who have not been involved in accreditation procedures for a long time. They cover basic topics such as the outline of accreditation procedures and the rules of the German Accreditation Council. All new experts are referred to the online training courses after their appointment on a probationary basis. Project managers also refer their experts to the option of online training courses in every procedure. Online trainings are offered both in synchronous and asynchronous formats.

Expert seminars (face-to-face) are held two to three times per years at various locations in Germany in order to allow all experts to participate. To begin, expert seminars provide information on updates and changes in FIBAA and in accreditation practice. Secondly, a key topic is addressed. In the past these topics have included features of dual study programmes, an introduction to institutional procedures, the requirements on franchise study programmes in accreditation, or regulatory changes in accreditation. The presentation handouts and presentation as well as the online training courses can be accessed at any time in the password-protected area for experts on FIBAA's homepage. Starting in 2018, the German- and English-language editions of FIBAA's quarterly newsletter will contain a section specifically dedicated to experts.

The experts are prepared for the specific quality assurance procedures by sending the self-documentation of the higher or continuing education as well as all relevant documents and information on the procedure at an early stage. In principle, the project managers ask all experts involved for feedback on the draft process schedule for the on-site visit and on potentially critical points and also encourage a preliminary team discussion by email as appropriate preparation. As a general rule, a group dinner is also held with a preliminary meeting on the evening before the on-site visit for the purpose of preparation. All documentation that is relevant for the experts is also available on FIBAA's website.

Composition and enhancement of the FIBAA expert pool

Currently the FIBAA expert pool comprises 700 distinguished members from higher education institutions (predominantly professors from universities and universities of applied sciences, both government-funded and private), senior business practitioners, and students. Due to the specific needs of procedures, FIBAA counts among its experts MBA, distance-learning, cooperative education and continuing education specialists. Professors with strong profiles in higher education leadership or quality management and quality assurance specialists from business practice qualify as experts for institutional accreditation. Furthermore, FIBAA appoints country experts for accreditations outside Germany.

The number of experts in the expert pool for system accreditation and for institutional accreditation is tailored to the project requirements and project type, as with programme-level accreditation. As part of this, the expert pool for programme-level

accreditation requires greater diversification since a broader spectrum of subjects needs to be covered.

FIBAA's expert pool is extremely dynamic, and sustainably growing due to market expansion. Few experts also quit their appointment, mostly due to retirement or change of status (e.g. student representatives after graduation). The division manager of Expert Management conducts requirement analyses at regular intervals and actively engages in recruiting suitable new experts. What is more, FIBAA is a member of the German-language student accreditor's pool in order to be able to staff procedures at short notice.

Evaluation of experts

Every project manager evaluates the experts after every procedure. For this there is a standardised evaluation sheet (see Annex 79). The evaluation results are collected and assessed. These assessments can be sent to the experts upon request. The purpose of the evaluation is early detection of requirements for discussion or training. If an expert is given a mark of 3 or lower on the point "Knowledge of accreditation practice" in two or more procedures, they are requested to take part in an (online) training course or a seminar before their next appointment. If an expert is given a mark of 3 or lower in the other assessment points in two or more procedures, the division head Expert Management discusses those points with the expert and decides on measures where appropriate, for example, participation in a training course or probationary status in their next procedure.

References

FIBAA's Expert Management: <http://www.fibaa.org/information-for-fibaa-experts/?L=1>

5. Criterion: Independence

Independence

The operational independence, i.e. the autonomy and independence of individuals (of the experts and committees), is guaranteed by FIBAA's legal entity status, by the regulations in the Foundation Statutes and in the Rules of Procedure. All experts and committee members employed by FIBAA perform their duties on the basis of their individual expertise and not as representatives of organisations. Influence by third parties is precluded both in law and through the voluntary commitment of those involved.

The FIBAA Foundation Council appoints the members of the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programme Accreditations (F-AC PROG), the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Institutional Accreditations (F-AC INST) and the FIBAA Certification Committee for Certifications of Continuing Educations Courses (F-CC CERT). It has no right to issue instructions in accreditation or certification decisions or in the development of procedures.

The committee members have signed a Confidentiality Agreement, a Data Protection Notice and an Impartiality Declaration. If a committee member is not impartial in a procedure, for example due to an affiliation with the higher education institution, they do not take part in the formation of an opinion or the decision-making process when the

corresponding procedure is addressed and must leave the room during the discussion and voting. If a committee member was involved in a quality assurance procedure by FIBAA as an expert, they likewise do not participate in the decision-making process for the relevant procedure. In addition, all committee members are required to provide notice immediately of any possible conflicts of interest that arise. This is stipulated in the Rules of Procedure of the respective committee (see above). Additionally, a code of conduct forming part of the rules of procedure stipulates for committee members that

- Committee members and experts must act and make decisions exclusively on the basis of quality considerations and must not be bound by third-party instructions.
- They must not use their membership to pursue their own interests or the interests of third parties.
- They must not disclose confidential information and operational or business secrets.

Furthermore, the independence of FIBAA's activities is ensured by the fact that the committees reach their decisions solely on the basis of the expert evaluations in the reports and on the basis of the statements made by the higher education institutions. The committees may deviate from the recommendations and recommended decisions given by the experts, provided that this seems necessary in terms of coherence, conformity of the specified procedural principles or consistency with other decisions. The same applies for members of the FIBAA Appeals Committee whose independence is also guaranteed by the rules of procedure of the FIBAA Appeals Committee and through declarations of impartiality. The experts in all quality assurance procedures also perform their duties as independent experts. All internal and external FIBAA employees also sign an Impartiality Declaration.

The FIBAA Foundation Council regulated the separation of assessment (quality assurance procedures) and consultancy (FIBAA Consult) by an updated resolution from February 2017. The assessment procedure may not be linked to consultancy services provided at the same time by FIBAA Consult in programme and institutional accreditation procedures, in the certification of study courses or in evaluations according to individual objectives. The resolution is available on the web pages of all assessment procedures and on the FIBAA Consult page.

Legal Status

FIBAA is a Swiss charitable foundation documented in the public deed from 24/07/2000 and the Commercial Register entry of the Canton of Zürich from 07/10/1987. It has been organised as such since 1994 pursuant to art. 80ff. of the Swiss Civil Code.

Historically, FIBAA was founded when it took control over an already existing Swiss federal foundation with the name Foundation for International Business Administration (FIBA), which had lost much of its staff. The statutes of FIBAA from 28th March 2011 underlie this report. The foundation was established by the leading Swiss, Austrian and German industry and employers' associations. The head office of FIBAA is located in Bonn, the registered office is in Zurich.

In compliance with the law on establishing a “Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany”, the German Accreditation Council has concluded a contract with FIBAA, in which the rights and obligations of the two parties in the German accreditation system are determined. According to this, FIBAA is obliged to apply the resolutions of the German Accreditation Council as well as to take into account the Common Structural Guidelines of the Länder set by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the version of them applicable to each resolution. FIBAA has been authorised in Germany since its first accreditation in 2002 to award the seal of the German Accreditation Council for programmes and internal quality assurance systems to higher education institutions.

Moreover FIBAA has been listed as full member of ENQA since 2002 and in the register of EQAR since April 2009. In 2017, FIBAA has been re-accredited the last time by the German Accreditation Council, re-registered by EQAR and renewed its membership with ENQA.

Further international recognition

1. Netherlands

FIBAA is entitled to carry out nationally recognised accreditation procedures at Dutch higher education institutions through employees (Lars Weber and Kristina Weng) who are certified "Panel Secretaries" at the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). NVAO accepts the reports prepared by FIBAA as a basis for its accreditation decisions.

2. Kazakhstan

With the issuance from June 2014 and on the basis of the recommendation from the Kazakh Republican Accreditation Council, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan has incorporated FIBAA into the National Register of Accreditation Agencies. This means that FIBAA’s resolutions on the accreditation of study programmes at Kazakh higher education institutions are officially recognised.

3. Austria

The Federal Ministry of Education in Vienna incorporated FIBAA into the “Regulation on quality assurance agencies” in 2013. FIBAA is, therefore, entitled to perform audits at public universities and universities of applied science in Austria.

4. Switzerland

In 2017 FIBAA gained recognition by the Swiss Accreditation Council in order to conduct institutional accreditation procedures in accordance with the Swiss Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector. The procedure for recognition includes that the agency introduces itself to the Swiss Accreditation Council.

Prospective candidate in Kyrgyzstan

In accordance with the law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Education”, independent accreditation of educational institutions will be introduced from 1 September 2016 in Kyrgyzstan. In May 2016, FIBAA applied to the National Accreditation Council at the Ministry of Education and Research of the Kyrgyz Republic for registration as an accreditation agency. In the event of a positive decision, FIBAA will be listed in the Kyrgyz Republic’s National Register for Accreditation Agencies and will therefore receive the right to implement programme-level as well as institutional accreditation procedures at Kyrgyz higher education institutions. During the assessment on-site, FIBAA is welcome to report on the current status of the requested recognition.

References

FIBAA’s Governance Structure and Decision-Making Bodies:

FIBAA Foundation Council: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/fibaa20/>

FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/procedures-at-programme-level/prog-according-to-fibaa-quality-standards/decision-bodies/>

FIBAA Certification Committee for Continuing Education Courses: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/procedures-at-programme-level/certification-of-continuing-education-courses/fibaa0851/>

FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Institutional Procedures: <http://www.fibaa.org/nc/en/institutional-procedures/institutional-accreditation/decision-bodies/>

FIBAA’s International Recognition: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/fibaa0540/>

6. Criterion: Resources

Finances

The FIBAA Foundation was made exempt from state tax, general municipal taxes and direct federal tax in Switzerland with effect from the 2005 tax period due to its pursuit of public-interest causes. This confirms that FIBAA’s activities are not for profit and that the interests of maintaining the organisation are secondary to the organisation’s public-interest cause. In this sense, the members of the FIBAA Foundation Council, the committees and the FIBAA Appeals Committee are employed on a voluntary basis.

FIBAA primarily generates income (revenues) through contracts it concludes with national and international higher education institutions on the implementation of programme and institutional accreditation procedures. Contracts for certification and evaluation procedures are also concluded. FIBAA covers its costs (expenses) using this income.

FIBAA’s financial position thus ensures that all financial resources are adequate and suitable for facilitating the full breadth of work conducted by FIBAA. This applies both to personnel expenses and to all other necessary expenses. Fees are set on the basis of a project cost calculation whereby the costs of the agency and of those directly involved in

the accreditation procedure (experts, project managers) are taken into account. The calculations contain flat rates that cover the incurred costs (expert fees, travel expenses and accommodation for the experts, committee meetings for decisions on ongoing accreditation procedures etc.).

FIBAA's fees are regularly reviewed by the executive management and the internal finance department to establish whether they cover the costs incurred by FIBAA. In order to monitor this and to establish the required financial as well as staff resources, the agency drafts annual plans of expected revenues and expenses.

Premises

FIBAA is located in a modern two-floor office facility in the centre of Bonn. A conference room and a meeting room are integrated into the office space. The division managers and fully employed project managers have individual offices in order to maintain the quality of the project process. FIBAA has long-term rental agreements on its office space. The space is sufficient for its current personnel. External meeting rooms are rented for meetings, if required.

IT Network

FIBAA uses a computer and network infrastructure. The employees at the head office have modern desktop or laptop computers where required. Laptops are selected according to specific criteria (readability on the screen, matt surface, weight, battery life) and are supplemented with external monitors and additional input devices in the office for ergonomic reasons. A current Windows operating system and an Office solution are installed as standard on the basis of a volume agreement with Microsoft. Service programmes such as virus protection, archiving tools, document management, printing services and various collaboration tools are also provided. In addition, each employee has access to a landline telephone with an extension number. FIBAA provides intranet/internet access in every room (external copper wire, 16 Mbit) via a wired gigabit Ethernet or WPA2-protected WiFi only accessible to employees. Separate WiFi with limited internet access has been set up for guests (e.g. training participants). Employees who regularly travel as part of their work receive mobile telephones (Apple iPhones) with telephone and 3G/4G internet services. FIBAA assumes the operating and administrative costs for these in full.

For all business data, a daily RDX-protected, central memory device is available, which can only be accessed via FIBAA's intranet. The databases necessary for procedure management can also be found there: project management, document workflow, correspondence, publication database and invoicing. In addition, there is extensive wiki-based technical documentation for the system administrator.

For reasons of transparency, FIBAA has a modern, multilingual website (German, English, Russian), which contains all information on the procedure models offered and other services for experts, committee members, and other stakeholders. The website can be found through all common search engines. In addition, publicly accessible,

password-protected tools are available for procedure evaluation (LimeSurvey), committee meetings (password-protected homepages) and the publication of reports. There is also a central groupware solution (project and date manager, calendar and address book). FIBAA has outsourced email receipt, sending and archiving to a service provider (based in Germany). The encrypted access to the email inboxes takes place via a local mail programme or password-protected online access.

7. Criterion: External quality assurance criteria and processes

FIBAA regularly performs procedures for quality assurance in higher education in its four business areas of programme accreditation (PROG), institutional procedures (INST), certification of continuing education courses (CERT) and consultation (FIBAA Consult) based on defined and published criteria.

At programme-accreditation and certification

- Programme accreditation in accordance with the requirements of the German Accreditation Council with due consideration of the ESG (for the acquisition of the seal of the German Accreditation Council for programmes);
- Programme accreditation (PROG) and certification (CERT) in accordance with FIBAA standards with due consideration of the ESG (for the acquisition of the FIBAA Quality Seal for programmes or continuing education courses).

In the area of programme accreditation and certification FIBAA has concentrated on law, social sciences and economics-focused study programmes as well as management qualifications. PROG represents FIBAA's main field of business.

The question and assessment catalogues for programme accreditation, for procedures in accordance with the requirements of the German Accreditation Council, and for procedures in accordance with the quality requirements of FIBAA arise from an understanding of quality that was developed in compliance with the ESG and the criteria of the German Accreditation Council. The structure of the question and assessment catalogue for certification is based on the assessment guide for PROG.

At institutional level

- The subject of system accreditation is the assessment of the internal quality assurance system of a higher education system in the area of teaching and learning. Essentially, the procedures review whether the existing quality assurance system guarantees that the qualification objectives defined by the higher education institution for the study programmes offered can be achieved and whether the ESG as well as the guidelines of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder and the criteria of the German Accreditation Council are applied in the developed and further development of study programmes. Following successful system accreditation, procedures that are established in accordance with the accredited system or were already subject to internal quality assurance in accordance with the guidelines of the accredited system, are accredited. As the seal of the German Accreditation Council is

awarded in system accreditation, the same guidelines apply as in programme accreditation with the awarding of the seal of the German Accreditation Council.

- The Institutional Audit Austria aims at providing evidence that a higher education institution successfully assumes institutional responsibility for quality assurance and development in the areas of learning, research and organisation with the aid of a quality management system effective across the higher education institution. In addition, the Institutional Audit Austria is intended to support higher education institutions in the further development of their internal quality management system as it does not review the higher education institution's quality management system selectively in relation to the individual study programmes, but rather takes a holistic view and demonstrates both the strengths of the system and also areas for potential development.
- The Swiss Higher Education Promotion and Coordination Act stipulates that Swiss HEIs and other institutions of the higher education sector periodically examine their quality of teaching, research and services and provide for long-term quality assurance and quality enhancement. Higher education and other institutions can prove this as part of an Institutional Accreditation. A successful institutional accreditation is the prerequisite for institutions to bear the name University, University of Applied Sciences, School of Education, or similar. Federal funding and the right to accredit programmes in compliance with the Higher Education Promotion and Coordination Act are dependent on a successful institutional accreditation. FIBAA conducts the Swiss Institutional Accreditation from the first encounter with the HEI up to the final assessment. The final accreditation decision is taken by the Swiss Accreditation Council based on FIBAA's assessment report and accreditation proposal.

- The Institutional Accreditation Procedure aims to provide a comprehensive review of the functional capability of the management and quality management system of a higher education institution and the associated processes of its various service areas. This procedure may be carried out at any higher education institution, regardless of their place of establishment. However, as a result of thematic overlapping with the German and Austrian national procedures, the procedure is primarily intended for higher education institutions in other countries.

- The aim of the Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management procedure is a strategic analysis and review of various service areas in a higher education institution. The higher education institutions receive feedback regarding their structures and processes beyond the status quo as well as prompts with regard to their specific development possibilities. The procedure can be conducted at higher education institutions that have already successfully undergone one of the institutional procedures mentioned above in the area of quality assurance and quality management (this has already been done twice). Furthermore, it can be carried out at any higher education institution regardless of their place of establishment.

In addition to formal requirements, the higher education institutions are also asked in all of FIBAA's quality assurance procedures to describe and evaluate their respective individual objectives at the level of higher education study programmes or courses. All

procedures stated take the principles of "fitness of purpose" and "fitness for purpose" into account.

Evaluations as part of FIBAA Consult

In contrast to FIBAA's accreditation and certification procedures, which review either study programmes, training courses or higher education institutions, in Evaluation Procedures According to Individual Objectives, the subject and the goals of evaluation as well as the concrete criteria are determined by the client together with FIBAA Consult. A detailed comparison of the specific criteria for the evaluation and the ESG standards is therefore not possible. On the one hand, the evaluation procedures can contribute to success monitoring and therefore to reporting, and on the other hand, they can provide incentives for (further) quality development. For this too there is a sample question and assessment catalogue, which can, depending on the procedure, be added to individually and in coordination with the higher education institution and the experts by FIBAA Consult's project management. The essential phases of an evaluation and the criteria and standards of the ESG are considered here in analogous application in accordance with the subject of evaluation and the respective objective of the evaluation.

Components of FIBAA's external quality assurance procedures

- the self-documentation in which the higher education institution or institution describes itself in accordance with the pre-defined and published standards and in accordance with the respective assessment guide for the procedure itself,
- the subsequent on-site visit in the peer-review procedure,
- the decision by the responsible FIBAA accreditation or certification committee on the basis of the report and the statement by the higher education institution/institution,
- the subsequent complete publication of the report on FIBAA's homepage, (regardless of whether it is a positive or negative decision), and, if the seal of the German Accreditation Council is awarded, publication in the "Higher Education Compass" as well as
- a consistent follow-up in the form of the review of the fulfilment of conditions and continuous monitoring based on the contractually regulated disclosure requirement of the higher education institution in the event of subsequent amendments. In addition, all quality assurance procedures are limited in time and require re-accreditation, re-certification and re-evaluation after set and published time periods.

The detailed process steps for all external quality assurance procedures are described on FIBAA's website in both German and English, as well as in the manuals for the respective procedures and are discussed with the higher education institutions as part of the preparatory informational discussions.

Decision-making in committees

The committees make accreditation and certification decisions in the procedures of FIBAA. Moreover there are FIBAA Panel Appointing Committees and the FIBAA Appeals Committee. The majority of the members are representatives of science, while the

remainder are representatives of professional practice and students. The concrete composition of the committees is regulated by the appointment regulation of the FIBAA Foundation Council.

In accordance with their rules of procedure, the responsibilities of the committees include:

- making the final decisions in the individual procedures;
- deciding on the fulfilment/non-fulfilment of conditions;
- defining and further developing the standards of FIBAA's own procedures;
- defining and further developing the AGs;
- determining the appointment criteria for experts;
- appointing and dismissing the experts;
- reviewing the expert teams assembled for the individual procedures and confirming or rejecting them.

As of 2018, FIBAA is adjusting its procedures in order to offer accreditation procedures for the seal of the German Accreditation Council, which are fully compliant with the new regulatory requirements in the German accreditation system. Other national and FIBAA Quality Seal procedures are not affected by these changes.

Reporting

The review reports of all external quality assurance procedures of FIBAA (both nationally and internationally) can be easily accessed on FIBAA's website, and are published in their entirety once the procedure has been completed (usually following the decision of the relevant committee), regardless of whether a positive or negative decision has been made. The only exception to this are sections, which are removed from the review reports due to data protection regulations or confidential information (e.g. data on the funding of a study programme or a higher education institution/other institution).

All review reports on procedures where the seal of the German Accreditation Council is awarded are additionally published in the "Higher Education Compass" in accordance with the rules of the German Accreditation Council. The review reports can also be found using Internet search engines.

In regards to programme accreditation, certification and institutional procedures, in which formal accreditation or certification decisions are made by the respective accreditation or certification committees, the decision of the responsible committee is added as a prefix to the review report and published together with it. The committee's decision (and if applicable, stated conditions as well as the accreditation, certification or evaluation period) and the review report of the procedural experts (with the decision recommendation) are clearly different from one another and are titled accordingly. Conditions (if stated), recommendations and follow-up measures are outlined in a summary at the beginning of the review report and are therefore easy to find.

In order to ensure that all review reports are drafted in a clear and comprehensible manner, there is a review report template for each FIBAA procedure, which is based on the

structure of the respective assessment guide and is used as a basis when drawing up the relevant draft report. The respective template is subdivided into chapters with clear headings and categories; the higher education institution/other institution and the subject of the procedure to be accredited/certified/evaluated. Each review report also has guidelines concerning font style and size as well as the overall length of the review report. For project managers, there is also a manual with clear guidelines for drawing up a draft report. Furthermore, all review reports contain general information on the study programme/higher education institution/other institution, information on the workflow of the accreditation, certification and evaluation procedures (including legal bases, names of the experts, etc.) and clearly distinguish between facts of the matter and assessment. There is also a so-called quality profile in each review report (for each chapter individually and as an overview at the end of the report), which summarises how each criterion was assessed by the expert group. This ensures that all review reports have a clear, comparable and homogeneous structure. The fact that the first draft report is written by FIBAA's respective project manager, and is completed and authorised in subsequent stages by all of the experts involved in the procedure, thereby underscoring that consistent and common criteria are used in drafting reports.

Publications

The findings FIBAA obtains in its external quality assurance procedures are summarised and systematically evaluated related to specific tasks above all by FIBAA Consult and by the Expert Management division.

FIBAA Consult continuously and systematically assesses the following areas in order to enhance its own procedures:

- Conditions issued in accreditation procedures
- Evaluation responses from the FIBAA Consult workshops
- Feedback from the FIBAA project manager regarding obstacles in accreditation in the jour fixe
- Contributions in various media (e.g. newsletters of the German Accreditation Council ENQA, EQAR, EUA, ECA, HRK, DAAD, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hochschuldidaktik (German Society for Higher Education Didactics), and professional publications such as Forschung und Lehre (Research and Teaching), duz (Deutsche Universitätszeitung: German University Newspaper), Handbuch Qualität in Studium und Lehre (Handbook of Quality in Teaching and Learning)

FIBAA Newsletter

The FIBAA newsletter is published four times a year and provides information on general findings and events that FIBAA has encountered during its activities in external quality assurance. The latest issues of the newsletter are available on the FIBAA website in German and English and are also sent to subscribers.

Since the newsletter was launched in 2011, it has established itself as an informative tool for keeping customers and other interested parties up to date on trends and FIBAA's

activities in accreditation and quality assurance. The structure of the newsletter – it briefly touches on current topics and then refers the reader to related links – has proven successful. Currently around 3.000 users are subscribed to the newsletter.

The newsletter specifically addressing FIBAA's pool of experts was discontinued in 2017. All experts will receive the regular newsletter, which will contain a section dedicated to FIBAA experts and their information needs.

FIBAA Consult workshop articles (“Factory”)

FIBAA Consult's so-called Workshop Articles or “Factory” evaluate general findings from FIBAA's accreditation practice and highlight challenges in accreditation procedures typically encountered by experts and project managers in their daily operations. They elucidate new developments, offer suggestions for improvement and examples of good practice, show possibilities for decision making and give reference to further information on quality assurance and enhancement in higher education. Workshop articles are released around four times a year and are circulated via the FIBAA newsletter. In addition, all workshop articles are available as a free download from the FIBAA Consult page, both in German and English.

Overview of hitherto published workshop articles

- Qualification for social engagement – background and implementation (in German)
- Programme or system accreditation – the agony of choice (in German)
- Accreditation of joint programmes according to the rules of the Accreditation Council (in German)
- Admission to Master's study – possible deviation from the 300 ECTS points rule (in German)
- Implementing the relative ECTS mark (in German)
- Lisbon Convention (in German)
- Permissible degree grade in Germany (in German)
- Dual study programmes (in German)
- Recognition in the higher education area - an overview (in German)
- Changes to accredited study programmes (in German)
- The new MBA Guidelines (in German and English)
- Crediting work and performance from outside of the higher education institution (in German)
- Competence-oriented study programmes (in German and English)
- Franchising courses of study (in German)
- Writing Learning Outcomes (in German and English)
- Learning Outcomes in Accreditation (in German and English)
- Modifications in the European Standards and Guidelines (in German and English)
- System accreditation decision (in German)
- Student-Centred Learning (in German and English)

Journal articles, chapters and presentations

In addition, employees of FIBAA Consult and FIBAA analyse various topics from the area of higher education quality assurance and publish the results of this in professional journals:

- Fink (2017): External Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Case of Accreditation Agencies – Current state, structures and operations. Assurance Qualité en Afrique francophone de l'espace CAMES «Réunion des Vice-Présidents». Bonn (in English).
- Fink (2017): Herausforderungen aus Sicht der Agenturen. Workshop der BundesDekaneKonferenz für Wirtschaftswissenschaften. Bochum (in German).
- Fink (2017): Quality Assurance Professionals Workshop, AACSB Europe, Middle East, and Africa Annual Conference 2017, Malta (in English).
- Fink (2017): The Use of Qualifications Frameworks as a Reference for Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation. Regional Workshop of Central-American Higher Education Quality Evaluation and Accreditation Bodies – conjointly organized with the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). Panama (in English).
- Fink (2017): The German experience of collaborating with foreign quality and accreditation agencies. Regional Workshop of Central-American Higher Education Quality Evaluation and Accreditation Bodies – conjointly organized with the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). Panama (in English).
- Fink (2017): The Role of Accreditation Agencies in the Implementation of Higher Education Reforms. HICA – Visita de estudio a Alemania. Bonn (in English).
- Fink (2017): Aktuelle Themen der Akkreditierung. 91. BundesDekaneKonferenz Wirtschaftswissenschaften. Winterthur (in German)
- Dettleff/Noe (2016): Dual study programmes from the perspective of external quality assurance. Handbook of Quality in Teaching and Learning (in German).
- Dettleff/Schröder (2015): External quality assurance as a tool for consumer protection, product security, strategy development and marketing. Handbook of Quality in Teaching and Learning (in German).
- Assenmacher/Bischof (2013): Equal opportunities as a focus in quality assurance – problems and opportunities in the implementation of an accreditation criterion. Quality in academics (in German).
- Schmidt (2013): Implementing the Bologna reform: Notes on aspects of quality management in German higher education institutions – experience from programme accreditation. Liber amicorum, vol. 2 (in German).
- Schmidt (2013): On the relationship between learning objectives, learning outcomes and their recognition. Handbook of Quality in Teaching and Learning (in German).
- Assenmacher/Bischof (2013): Equal opportunities as a focus of accreditation – wish and reality. Handbook of Quality in Teaching and Learning (in German).
- Schmidt (2013): About learning outcomes. Magazine "Higher Schools of Kazakhstan", 3rd issue (in English).

- Schmidt (2013): The Euro FH University of Applied Sciences Hamburg – an example of progressive and quality-oriented higher education design Liber amicorum, vol. 3 (in English).
- Schmidt (2012): Quality assurance: A challenge for higher education institutions – an opportunity for students. Liber amicorum, vol. 1 (in German).

The articles in the professional journals, therefore, focus on overarching issues and are intended to facilitate a general improvement in the attractiveness of quality assurance and the work of the agencies. For example, 36 models of dual study programmes accredited by FIBAA were empirically evaluated in order to investigate the opportunities and risks involved in dual study programmes with regard to academic quality (ibid.).

The findings from their work have been taken into account in both national and international specialist lectures by FIBAA (for example in 2016 at the BundesDezernatKonferenz on the topic: “Accreditation in accordance with the decision by the Federal Constitutional Court” and at a conference at the KAZGUU University in Kazakhstan in 2016 on the topic “Academic Integrity in Higher Education”). In addition, individual project managers are also active in other working groups, for example in the HRK working group on the topic of franchises.

References

FIBAA’s Programme-level Procedures:

<http://www.fibaa.org/en/procedures-at-programme-level/>

FIBAA’s Institutional Procedures: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/institutional-procedures/>

FIBAA Consult (incl. analyses and publications): <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa-consult/>

FIBAA’s Newsletter: <http://www.fibaa.org/nc/en/news/>

FIBAA’s Workshop and Event Schedule:

<http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa-consult/workshops-and-seminars/>

8. Criterion: Quality assurance

Internal quality management system (QMS)

FIBAA has comprehensively implemented its internal quality assurance measures in all of its work processes and areas (management – service areas – support areas). This includes defining and updating all business processes in a quality management handbook (QM handbook), systematic and regular revision of working documents, evaluation of all of FIBAA’s services as well as the creation and modification of internal checklists and tutorials.

In addition, FIBAA created the position of Quality Manager (QM), an employee responsible for the internal QM. FIBAA’s quality principles as well as the procedures and instruments of internal Quality Management, are made available on FIBAA’s website. FIBAA also receives support from a data protection representative who is available for employees as a contact person in exercising their rights and who endeavours to ensure the

maintenance of all regulations relevant to data protection by providing clarification and advice.

Quality management handbook

In consultation with the people responsible for each area, the QM compiles and reviews the QM handbook in electronic format using the software ViFlow. The current version is password protected and can be viewed online by all employees. Its use is intended for job-related tasks. The QM describes in proportionate detail all processes in all levels from the management, service and support area. It also includes templates, work instructions and additional information. All standard processes that are regularly repeated are described. The definition of these processes serves to inform the employees about the intended execution of the tasks and activities in the areas so that each process fulfils the specified quality standards and all relevant guidelines are observed. Above all new employees can use the QM handbook to look up which tasks they need to complete in which order and with which work steps.

Evaluations

All FIBAA procedures are evaluated by those involved (both internal and external stakeholders). The results from the evaluations will be used for the further development of the respective formats: References to unnecessary passages in the procedure documents were addressed during the respective reviews. Important topics that concern experts, higher education institutions and committees were discussed in detail in the annual topic stores in the committees. The results of these discussions are also taken into consideration during procedure processing and in the further development of documents.

The questionnaires were reviewed during the last accreditation period with regard to their structure and content, redundant questions were removed and new questions relevant to quality assurance were added in their place. The offer of online questionnaires has also been systematically expanded. In addition, the process for the evaluation of project managers has been revised and is now systematic. This allowed for an increase in the return rates and therefore an improvement in the usefulness of the evaluations. FIBAA Consult evaluations procedures and events (workshops, seminars, and conferences) are also being evaluated.

The results of the evaluations are summarised in the annual quality management report by the QM and are published together with the description of the quality concept on FIBAA's website. Any striking results are discussed with the responsible area managers and in the quality team (division management, general management and quality management representative). If changes to the process sequences result from this, these are reviewed with the respective division manager and the QM and are added to the QM handbook accordingly. If the amendments concern procedural documents, checklists or tutorials, these are also updated accordingly, submitted to the committees for approval and announced in a suitable manner. Those affected by the amendments in the processes are contacted directly and are obliged to implement the changes in the future.

Document management

Internal checklists and tutorials as well as external manuals and templates in consultation with management, the division managers create internal checklists and tutorials for the employees as well as external guidelines and templates for FIBAA's customers and experts. These are amended according to changes in processes, new regulations, results from the German Accreditation Council's evaluated monitoring procedures and from complaints procedures and adjustments to the procedural documents and are therefore always up to date. The internal checklists and tutorials serve to provide FIBAA employees with information and training and are issued at the beginning of the introductory training phase. The employees are obliged to use these documents. With this FIBAA aims to ensure that all its employees adhere to the standards it issues and the respective relevant rules in full in their work processes. FIBAA customers receive all relevant manuals and templates directly before a contract is concluded. FIBAA experts receive these as soon as the respective expert team is appointed and approved/confirmed by the FIBAA Panel Appointing Committee. The manuals and templates ensure that FIBAA customers know how the self-documentation should be structured and which criteria are assessed so that they can prepare everything accordingly.

FIBAA systematically revises all procedure documents as well as the QM handbook:

- If changes are made to the national and international guidelines (such as ESG, EQUAL MBA Guidelines, Rules of the German Accreditation Council for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation, Common Structural Guidelines of the Länder for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Study Programmes etc.).
- If FIBAA employees suggest a need for improvement.
- During the regular review of processes as part of the plan-do-check-act control cycle.

Procedures for the continuous improvement of the internal QMS

Enhancing FIBAA's operations is an essential part of the internal QM system. As part of this, it is essential that improvement is seen as a path towards more efficient and higher quality working and not as an end target.

The following formats are available as regular events for providing information by the management and the area managers and for employees to discuss with one another and also to provide a platform for suggestions for improving processes in the procedures, such as internal jours fixes, management meetings, committee meetings, etc.

To give an example regarding the subsequent improvements from the committee meetings, the division managers report to the project managers working in these areas on the procedure adopted in the meeting, topics of discussion in the respective committees and other notes on experts or procedures. The aim is to familiarise project managers who are not present at the meetings, usually for reasons of cost, with the perspective of the committee members, to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures and to optimise FIBAA's procedures both for project managers and for the committee members. These discussions are usually held four times per year and are particularly useful for the

area of programme-level accreditation, as a high number of procedures are processed by different project managers.

Moreover, the division managers of FIBAA's service areas invite both internal and external project managers working in their area to this meeting format in order to provide information about changes in the procedures or in their processes. In particular, if an assessment guide has been changed or if changes to the project processing sequences arise due to national or international guidelines, the project managers receive the tools necessary to process future projects here.

Usually, FIBAA's management invites all internal and external employees to attend an information day once a year where employees can discuss topics with one another and be introduced to all other areas. This primarily serves to provide information about the services offered by FIBAA, current projects being processed by FIBAA and the status of the respective activities.

In all formats, employees have the opportunity to report on their experiences from their projects, to present recurrent problems and to suggest process improvements. In the event of systematic anomalies, the employee responsible for the process reviews the process, if appropriate in coordination with the management or the QM. If the responsible employee considers the change to a process to be advisable, they give their reasons for this to the QM. All employees are appropriately informed (see above).

Changes during the regular review of processes as part of the plan-do-check-act control cycle

The QM regularly reviews internal processes with regard to their currentness, feasibility and orientation towards results. The focus is, above all, on the following questions:

- Is the process implemented in the form documented?
- Are the employees/roles involved indicated?
- Do additional employees/roles need to be added or removed?
- Is the process coherent?
- Can the process be streamlined?
- Does the process achieve its objective?
- Are all guidelines observed?

If the QM comes to the conclusion that a process needs to be reviewed, they discuss this with the responsible division manager. They apply the changes to the QM handbook and provide the division manager and, if appropriate, the management with a draft. They then check the draft and correct or approve it. All employees are informed of the results in a suitable manner.

Ensuring maintenance of the ESG by the QM

FIBAA provides documents for all procedures (for example the relevant assessment guides). These are based around the ESG and take the ESG standards into account. All experts and all committee members sign the Impartiality Declaration with which they pledge to prevent intolerance and all forms of discrimination. FIBAA's employees are

obliged by the General Equal Treatment Act [Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz] applicable in Germany to prevent or eliminate in their work discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, sex, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual identity.

The QM handbook is continually revised as structural changes have been made in many areas and process since the last reaccreditation. It is up to date and will be made available for inspection during the on-site visit.

External review

At set intervals, FIBAA undergoes external review by the German Accreditation Council as well as re-registration by EQAR and renewal of its ENQA full membership. This application serves as the basis for the expert assessment for all three procedures.

Appeals Procedure

The higher education institutions and other institutions, which do not agree with a decision of the corresponding committee or with individually stated conditions, may lodge a complaint with FIBAA for each completed FIBAA accreditation and certification procedure. For the evaluation procedures by FIBAA Consult that do not conclude with any formal decision, a higher education institution/other institution may also lodge a complaint if they do not consider the recommendations in the review report to be appropriate.

In all of the aforementioned cases, this complaint must be lodged within a one month period after written notification of the decision and must be justified in writing in each case. After the complaint has been received by the FIBAA office, following renewed referral by the experts, it is forwarded to the responsible committee for a decision to be made. If this does not remedy the complaint, the procedure is presented to the FIBAA Appeals Committee for review and an opinion. The FIBAA Appeals Committee clarifies the matter and gives the responsible committee a reasoned recommendation for a final decision.

After consideration by the FIBAA Appeals Committee, FIBAA's responsible committee makes a reconsidered and final decision. In the case of a negative decision by the responsible committee, the costs of the complaint procedure must be paid by the client. If the complaint is not remedied, the higher education institution concerned may take legal action against this. This, however, only applies to higher education institutions in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, since the agency acts here as a loaning agency.

The information on the possibility to lodge a complaint is stipulated in the procedural conditions of FIBAA, which form an integral part of each contract in the areas of programme-level accreditation, certification and institutional procedures. In the area of FIBAA Consult, the corresponding information can be found in the general terms and conditions for consultancy. The higher education institutions/other institutions are also informed about the complaints process, including guidelines and deadlines, via legal remedy instructions in the respective decisions, which are sent following the official decision of the respective committee.

The rules of procedure for the FIBAA Appeals Committee stipulate the tasks of the committee, ensures its impartiality in the procedures to be assessed, determines the decisions to be made and describes the procedures. The FIBAA Appeals Committee consists of four members, who are made up of the status groups of professors, professional practice representatives and student representatives and are appointed for three years.

In order to improve the consistency in the implementation of the complaints procedure, a manual was created for the project managers. Especially given the fact that each individual project manager deals with only very few complaints, it is necessary to state the requirements and individual steps of the procedure in a fairly comprehensible way. To this end, a template for presenting a complaint has also been created in parallel.

The information on the possibility to lodge a complaint is stipulated in the procedural conditions of FIBAA, which form an integral part of each contract in the areas of programme-level accreditation, certification and institutional procedures. The higher education institutions/other institutions are also informed about the complaints process, including guidelines and deadlines, via legal remedy instructions in the respective decisions, which are sent following the official decision of the respective committee. For each FIBAA procedure information can be found on the complaints process and the description of the complaints procedure on the homepage under the menu item "Procedural steps", which is accessible to the public.

References

FIBAA's Internal Quality Management: <http://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/fibaa30/>