

**Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance  
of the Swiss Universities**

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**Berne, May 2002**

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## Foreword

The business office of the “Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen, OAQ)” opened on 1 October 2001. The intensive collaboration between all the parties involved in setting up the OAQ has certainly paid off, and today the OAQ rests on a firm legal foundation.

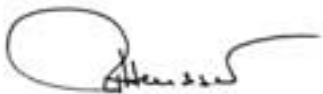
The opening ceremony held on 22 November was attended by Charles Kleiber, the State Secretary for Science and Research, delegations from the Swiss University Conference (SUK) and the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS), the Scientific Advisory Board and the staff employed in the business office.

In the first 90 days, the necessary infrastructure was established at the business office, and the scientific staff immediately set about developing national guidelines for accreditation based on best international practices. The task of drafting these guidelines was assisted by the Scientific Advisory Board of the OAQ.

The tasks facing us are challenging ones, and we are aware that we are operating in a field in which many different interests overlap. Our central concern is to work closely with our partners in tertiary education and to maintain these contacts.

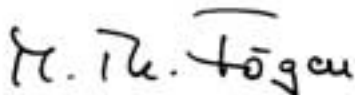
The work done by the OAQ is intended to underpin and promote the quality of education at Swiss universities, thus making a substantial contribution to enhancing the attractiveness of the university landscape in this country. Our aim is to pursue this goal in a spirit of dialogue and transparency and to ensure that all those with an interest in this process are kept well informed.

Everyone concerned has expressed goodwill and a readiness to cooperate with us, and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their support.



**Dr. Rolf Heusser**

Director of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance  
of the Swiss Universities



**Prof. Marie Theres Fögen**

President of the Scientific Advisory Board

## 1. The Centre's activities in 2001

### 1.1 Staff

The Swiss University Conference (SUK) elected Rolf Heusser as Director of the OAQ in April 2001. The positions for scientific and administrative staff were advertised in July 2001. Five scientific collaborators and two staff for the secretariat were selected from the 280 or so applications received. They all work part-time. Particular emphasis was placed on interdisciplinary and inter-regional aspects when the team was recruited.

### 1.2 Scientific Advisory Board

In July 2001, the Swiss University Conference (SUK) also elected the members of the Scientific Advisory Board – comprising its President, Marie Theres Fögen, and five other members – in close collaboration with the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS).

### 1.3 Office premises

Suitable premises for the business office were found at Effingerstrasse 58 in Berne in August 2001; the office was officially opened on 1 October.

### 1.4 Documents available at the end of December 2001

- Report on the accreditation and evaluation systems in nine European countries (country report)
- Report on selected international accreditation systems for specific professions and disciplines (technical report)
- Guidelines for Academic Accreditation in Switzerland (draft)
- Accreditation Criteria and Standards for Swiss Universities (draft)

The main task of the scientific staff in the first three months of operation was to produce *draft national guidelines, criteria and standards for academic accreditation in Switzerland*.

Before this material could be drafted, the people working on the project had to gain an overview of the systems operating in various European countries. Each of the scientific collaborators was allocated one or two countries and was given the task of writing a report on the current situation regarding accreditation and evaluation systems in those countries. The focus was not only on the procedures and criteria used in each country; the staff produced a profile of each country, showing the strengths and weaknesses of each model. A comprehensive report detailed the current situation in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. At the same time, a *report on evaluation systems for specific professions and disciplines* was produced covering the fields of engineering, management development, business administration, medicine and public health, and universities of applied science.

The *report on the current situation in nine European countries* formed the basis of the first draft of accreditation guidelines for Swiss universities. The draft was subsequently revised and refined in close collaboration with the Scientific Advisory Board and in the light of existing international accreditation and evaluation systems for specific professions and disciplines.

### **1.5 National and international contacts**

In May 2001, Rolf Heusser began a round of visits to the people responsible for various European networks concerned with accreditation and quality assurance, and he has attended a number of international workshops since then. Networking and an exchange of experience with international organizations is a very important aspect of the work done by the OAQ.

Since he was appointed Director of the OAQ, Rolf Heusser has also paid initial visits to numerous university rectors and has attended meetings and personal discussions with responsible individuals at the Swiss University Conference, the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities and other partners active in science, research and politics. These contacts have yielded valuable information to assist the OAQ in its activities.

## 2. Reports on accreditation and evaluation systems in nine European countries and on selected international accreditation systems for specific professions and disciplines

### 2.1 Report on accreditation and evaluation systems in nine European countries

#### Austria

The centrally organized education system in Austria is facing a paradigm shift: the intention is to give the universities a greater degree of autonomy in order to increase their responsibility and organizational freedom. However, autonomous universities need a more precisely defined state framework for quality assurance.

Since 2000 the independent National Accreditation Council has been accrediting educational institutions which intend to run a private university as well as private universities which have already been accredited and intend to offer a new study programme. The accreditation council does not evaluate the universities; its function is to check whether recommendations made to and conditions imposed on private universities have been met. The independent National Council for Universities of Applied Science has been accrediting new study programmes at these institutions since 1994 and at the same time carries out internal and external evaluations of study programmes that have already been accredited. Here, however, the emphasis is increasingly shifting from evaluating programmes to evaluating institutions. Evaluations are carried out by the universities and by the Council for Universities of Applied Science. The establishment of a national accreditation (and evaluation) agency under the aegis of the Rectors' Conference of the Austrian Universities is currently under discussion against the background of the changes in the Austrian education system mentioned above.

Therese Steffen Gerber

#### Belgium

Belgium does not have a national accreditation agency, and the linguistic regions each take a different approach in this field. The Flemish government is planning to adopt a decree recognizing the accreditation organization which is about to be established in the Netherlands (NAO). This move is part of the project on European cooperation in quality assurance matters. Little is known at the moment about how this collaboration with the NAO will be implemented. In Flanders, the accreditation of individual study programmes is linked directly to the reform of Bachelor/Master programmes. The objective of this reform is to ensure the quality, recognition and credibility of the new diplomas. The Flemish Minister for Education intends to turn existing programmes into courses of study culminating in a Bachelor or Master degree. The aim is basically to accredit the same courses under a different name.

Two decrees passed by the Flemish government in 1991 and 2000 make evaluation of these programmes mandatory. The Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and the Council of Flemish Institutions of Higher Education (VHLORA) have been responsible since 1991 and 2000 respectively for coordinating the procedure for cross-sectional evaluation of departments at universities and "Hogescholen" (universities of applied science). The Belgian Rectors' Council of French-speaking Universities (CREF) introduced a procedure for evaluating tertiary education in 1999. The evaluation processes each consist of two phases, internal evaluation (self-evaluation) and external evaluation (peer review). The primary aim of this procedure is to encourage the tertiary institutions to improve the quality of the education they offer.

Annick Weizmann

## Denmark

In 1993 a new Universities Law was enacted which conferred greater autonomy on these institutions. In return, the universities were required to improve their transparency. It was against this background that the Danish Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education was founded in 1992; this body was replaced by the "Evalueringinstitut" (EVA), a national evaluation institute, in 1999. EVA has been responsible for evaluating all levels of education since then.

EVA is responsible for accreditation and evaluation at higher education level. *Ex post* accreditation applies only to private educational institutions, and its aim is to establish whether students at these institutions are entitled to state funding. The decision-making process used by EVA consists of three stages: self-evaluation, a study of the labour market which follows up former students to see how they are currently employed, and finally an on-site visit by EVA. The objective of *ex post* evaluation of study programmes is to determine whether their content complies with the mission statement ("fitness for purpose").

The evaluation process consists of self-evaluation, a survey of students, a visit from an external team of experts, and publication of the evaluation report. Follow-up is generally carried out.

Current developments include procedures designed to evaluate entire faculties (a "framework for quality") and a pilot study on the international evaluation of programmes in the agricultural sciences. Accreditation of university education in line with the Bologna Declaration could also be introduced; this is currently under consideration.

Sylvie Fasel Berger

## Finland

There are 20 universities and 30 polytechnics (comparable to universities of applied science) in Finland. The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) was set up in 1996 and employs 14 people. Its primary objective is to improve the quality of Finland's universities. It carries out systematic institutional evaluations (quality audits) and individual programme evaluations as requested by an independent Quality Council. One FINHEEC employee can evaluate three to four disciplines each comprising 20 units. The majority of the external evaluators come from other countries. The peer-review report is published uncensored. The criteria for evaluating institutions are flexible depending on the main focus of the institution in question. No minimum standards have been set. All 20 universities have been evaluated to date, and the polytechnics may also be evaluated in the future. Follow-up is carried out between three and five years after the evaluation has been concluded. An improvement in the quality of the evaluated institutions has been ascertained in some cases. Success stories are published immediately. There is a general trend in Finland towards more output-oriented monitoring (abilities of students who have completed their programmes) and a tendency for quantitative indicators to be replaced by qualitative indicators. Finland recognizes as current "good practices" Sweden's quality audits, the self-assessment propagated by the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), as well as Denmark's programme evaluations and the various guidelines implemented in the UK.

Rolf Heusser. Source: visit to the FINHEEC in Helsinki, 29 November 2001 (Kauko Hämäläinen, Secretary General, Anna-Maja Liuhanen, scientific collaborator at the FINHEEC)

## France

The “Quality assurance system for higher education in France” encompasses several parameters: recognition, evaluation and four-year contracts. The state has long had a monopoly on awarding university degrees. Via the Ministries of Education and Guardianship it periodically empowers the state scientific, cultural or vocational teaching institutions to award national diplomas or titles. Accreditation of the schools of engineering is largely the province of the Engineering Education Commission (CTI), which is responsible for accrediting all state or private institutions that offer high-level scientific or technical training. The recognition procedure carried out by the ministries is generally based on a dossier, with the CTI also making an on-site visit. There is a significant difference between the “usual” accreditation procedures and the recognition procedure since the expert evaluation carried out for the latter is not based on predetermined standards.

A number of departments at the Ministry of Education or offices attached to the ministry evaluate various aspects of the university sector, although since 1985 the evaluation of the policy and overall running of the state institutions of higher education (universities, schools, etc.) has been the sole province of the National Evaluation Committee (CNE). This committee became an independent administration in 1989; the Law on university education passed in 1984 made evaluation by the CNE mandatory. This evaluation comprises an internal (self-evaluation) and an external (peer review) element, from which a number of recommendations are derived. The objective of the policy of four-year contracts is to ensure that institutions of higher education are evaluated periodically, i.e. every four years, from 2002.

Annick Weizmann

## Germany

The National Accreditation Council was established in 1999 following a resolution by the Conference of German Ministers for Culture. It is an independent institution that accredits regional accreditation agencies, whose activities it also coordinates. Germany was thus the first country in western Europe to have an official national accreditation institution. At the moment, however, only new Bachelor/Master programmes are accredited. The procedure is carried out on a voluntary basis by regional and profession-specific accreditation bodies such as the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in Hannover (ZEVA), the Institute of Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance (ACQUIN), and the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA). The basic examination schedules specific to each region (*Bundesland*) determine whether or not new study programmes are introduced. The present tendency is towards accrediting not just Bachelor/Master programmes but all the programmes offered at tertiary level. The German Science Council has been accrediting private universities since 2001 – also on a voluntary basis.

There is no national evaluation agency in Germany since the country has a federal structure. There are a number of regional agencies – ZEVA, Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg (EVALAG), Northern Alliance, etc. – involved in evaluation. Project Q (a quality assurance project which has been managed by the Rectors’ Conference of the German Universities since 1998) networks various initiatives within and outside the tertiary education system in the different regions, promotes an exchange of experience and offers a broad platform for further development.

Therese Steffen Gerber

## Netherlands

From 2003 an independent national accreditation organization (NAO) shall systematically accredit all existing graduate programmes and be responsible for the licensing of new programmes at the country's public and private universities and universities of applied science. The accreditation system is aimed solely at the study programmes. It will continue the work done by the evaluation system that has been operating in the Netherlands for 15 years and which is considered internationally to be exemplary. This system comprises a self-evaluation report written by the university and an external evaluation (peer review). The existing evaluation agencies VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands), HBO-Raad (Association of Universities of Professional Education), PAEPON (Platform for Designated/Recognized Private Institutions of Education in the Netherlands) and others will probably continue to carry out the task of evaluation (organization of self-evaluation and the peer visits, validation and scoring of results) under the new system. The NAO will acknowledge the findings of the evaluation agencies by granting accreditation and will develop validation guidelines and criteria for this purpose. Discussion is also currently focusing on the likely influence of the NAO on the formulation of the criteria and standards that the agencies will employ for evaluation purposes.

From 2003 there will be a move towards a more open market when the NAO will be able to validate both national and foreign agencies.

An institution needs to be successfully accredited in order to award degrees recognized by the state and to qualify for funding for its programmes and students. The results and accreditation reports are published. The state Inspectorate of Higher Education is responsible for the supervision and meta-evaluation of the entire evaluation and accreditation system.

Karl Zbinden-Bärtschi

## Sweden

Following the introduction of a new law on university education in 1993, the institutions operating in this sector were given greater autonomy in return for greater transparency towards the state. This was the context in which the National Agency for Higher Education was set up in 1995, a body which has a number of functions ranging from the accreditation and evaluation of education at university level to ancillary tasks such as oversight of the country's licensing policy and the provision of general information on studies at this level.

Accreditation is carried out *ex ante* at the request of an institution at a lower level in the educational hierarchy and confers on this institution the right to award higher qualifications, to set up a new department or field of research, or to be classified as a university. *Ex post* evaluation is done in two stages: the quality audit (scrutiny of the quality assurance activities introduced by all institutions) is intended to support these educational institutions in their efforts to improve their own quality assurance systems. The quality assessment, introduced with a six-year cycle in 2001, acts as a quality control for all study programmes. If the results are not good enough and a repeat quality assessment fails to show an improvement, the level of funding awarded to the institution may be reduced, even leading to the closure of study programmes. The aim is to eliminate the quality audits in the medium term since most of the ground they cover is also included in the quality assessments.

The two processes – accreditation and evaluation – have a similar structure, consisting of self-evaluation, evaluation by a group of external experts, a report and publication of the results.

The procedures developed by the Swedish agency have a good reputation and are often cited as exemplary in terms of both their scientific basis and their suitability for their intended purpose.

Sylvie Fasel Berger

## United Kingdom

Evaluation of university education in the United Kingdom has been the task of a central Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) since 1997. It undertakes subject reviews across all the universities once every six years, and at the same time produces comprehensive institutional reviews. These institutional evaluations follow the classic pattern of self-evaluation, a visit by a group of experts (peer review) and a report containing assessments and recommendations. The measures taken in response to this report are monitored. Until 2001, a score from 1 to 4 was awarded for six main criteria categories in the subject reviews. This allowed comparisons to be made between the institutions, and showed that they varied markedly in some instances. After each evaluation the agency issues its verdict on “accreditation” (quality approved/not approved). However, the right of an institution to award diplomas is a political decision. In some areas – including the health service and trusteeships – professional associations accredit training programmes on the basis of evaluations carried out by the QAA.

The reports, the evaluation procedures and the detailed evaluation criteria are all published. Great attention is paid to equal opportunities, with special weight being given to the needs of minorities and disabled students. Existing partnerships between universities in the form of franchises led the QAA to produce criteria for these special cases (collaborative provision). The procedure is currently being streamlined. The independent evaluation of programmes and institutions has drawn the universities into a kind of “control net” that the lecturers perceive as extremely intrusive. It is becoming less and less common to award a score to evaluations; this approach is being replaced by a system that seeks to promote best practices.

Isabelle Dustin

### 2.1.1 Summary

This report has aimed to describe the common and distinctive features of the accreditation and evaluation systems operating in nine European countries. Most of the countries featured here are in western and northern Europe since these are the countries in which accreditation and evaluation organizations were set up several years ago and which therefore can draw on valuable experience. It should be borne in mind that the terms “accreditation” and “evaluation” are not used synonymously everywhere. Finland and Sweden, for example, carry out evaluations – known as quality audits and quality assessments – the organization, content and implications of which correspond to accreditation as we understand it. There is a tendency throughout Europe to make very little distinction between the terms evaluation and accreditation. Nowadays it is impossible to perform accreditation unless it is preceded by an evaluation process.

The German-speaking countries started to establish accreditation systems in 1999. Switzerland followed suit in 2001 by setting up the OAQ and has created a solid legal foundation for this body’s work.

The accreditation systems operated by the countries have a number of features in common. All the systems comprise three phases: self-evaluation, external evaluation by independent peers, and the accreditation decision. In eight of the nine countries considered here, provision is made for follow-up to ensure that the quality-assurance measures that the universities are required to implement are in fact observed. It is a surprising fact that the accreditation and evaluation results are published; the peer reports are, in most cases, also made public (again, in eight out of nine countries).

There is also a large degree of concordance between the primary criteria used to determine quality (strategy, organization and quality management at the institution; personnel policy; teaching staff and infrastructure; students; collaboration).

In Austria and the Netherlands, an institution is accredited if it meets minimum requirements; other countries have recently tended more to consider best practices (United Kingdom and Belgium). A number of countries avoid these “extremes”, preferring to employ “standards” (Germany, Denmark, France and Sweden).

The main differences between the accreditation systems in the countries reviewed here are to be found primarily in the object of the accreditation procedure or the accreditation/evaluation policies employed. The Netherlands and Sweden will in future evaluate and accredit all existing study programmes; in Germany and Belgium the focus is on accrediting new Master/Bachelor programmes; and Finland carries out systematic quality audits at the university level. In England, in contrast, both the universities themselves and the study programmes they offer are evaluated. Universities of applied science are also accredited in most countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden). Private institutions are accredited in Austria, Germany and Denmark. The Netherlands will probably be expanding its accreditation procedure to include this category soon.

The quality-assurance bodies employ a large number of people (up to 100) in all the countries which systematically evaluate study programmes at university level. At the moment, this kind of approach would appear to be neither sensible nor practicable for Switzerland. The OAQ believes that the Finnish model would be the most suitable for Switzerland.

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) currently employs 14 people who carry out systematic evaluations (quality audits) at 20 universities in the country (in future they will also evaluate the 30 polytechnics which are equivalent to universities of applied science). Study programmes are only accredited/evaluated selectively for specific purposes.

## **2.2. Report on selected international accreditation systems for specific professions and disciplines**

### **Engineering sciences**

#### **Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)**

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) is an American association to which the 28 professional bodies in the sphere of engineering belong. It evaluates and accredits training programmes at tertiary level in technical and related areas. The ABET seeks to offer its services to the public through its commitment to improving the quality of training and by supporting prospective students in their choice of study programme and location in a highly competitive market.

Accreditation is voluntary and depends directly on the evaluation results achieved by the programmes. These are divided into a number of categories (engineering, technology and computer science), each of which is evaluated according to a specific set of criteria and standards. Overall, the system is comparable to those employed by other accreditation institutions. The ABET publishes a full directory of institutions whose programmes have been given a positive evaluation and have thus been accredited. However, it does not rank the institutions or their study programmes and the evaluation reports are not published. It only accredits American programmes, although it may award the label “substantial equivalency” to a foreign programme which offers a comparable level of education. There is also a mutual recognition agreement between the ABET and other (mainly Anglo-Saxon) accreditation institutions.

## Management development

### European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)

EQUIS was set up in 1997 on the initiative of the non-profit European Foundation for Management Development.

EQUIS is a system developed in Europe for strategic audits and the evaluation and accreditation of institutions that provide management training programmes.

Accreditation by EQUIS has three main objectives: to provide information on companies that offer management development programmes and accelerate the creation of a European market in this sphere without prescribing a uniform standard; to allow educational institutions to position themselves in line with international standards; and to promote quality assurance in this special field. The EQUIS procedure is always carried out *ex post* and covers the entire institution. An institution seeking accreditation and which is eligible for the procedure must take the following steps before it can be approved: self-evaluation; review by international experts with a concluding report; decision by the accreditation body of EQUIS which either awards the EQUIS quality label for a period of five years, grants accreditation under certain conditions for a period of three years followed by re-evaluation, or rejects the application. The costs involved – EUR 20'000 – are borne by the institution seeking accreditation. Fifty-two institutions have been accredited to date. The European Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP) has been developed for institutions that do not qualify for accreditation. This allows them to evaluate themselves, to prepare for accreditation at a later date or to apply for the fast-track accreditation procedure after one year.

The EQUIS quality label has an excellent reputation. The quality of the accredited schools is acknowledged internationally and the analytical procedures involved are comprehensive and well-suited to the task.

Efforts are bound to be made to establish EQUIS on a broader footing outside Europe in the future since the quality label has already been awarded eight times in other continents.

Sylvie Fasel Berger

## Business administration

### Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA)

In 1994 the FIBAA was set up with the aim of developing and applying a standardized procedure for assessing MBA study programmes. The FIBAA is an independent international foundation based in Bonn (Germany). It has been accrediting business-oriented Bachelor and Master programmes and state and private institutions in Germany, Austria and Switzerland since 1995. Accreditation is awarded if certain minimum standards reflecting the requirements of the business world are met. The FIBAA was granted the status of agency in 2000 by the German Accreditation Council. The FIBAA also advises students on their choice of business school programme and provides information to the business community.

The FIBAA accreditation procedure comprises the following stages: initial consultation free of charge, application to the FIBAA, self-evaluation using FIBAA criteria (guidelines), peer visit, evaluation report to the FIBAA accreditation commission, decision. The process can take between four and 12 months. The FIBAA employs the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) method in its evaluation procedure. The basis is formed by the objectives of the study programme, which the business school defines. The FIBAA quality standards are applied to the study programme to establish the extent to which these self-set objectives are being met. The FIBAA criteria and standards are based on requirements determined by the Conference of University Rectors, the Conference of Ministers for Culture and the Accreditation Council. The FIBAA has also developed its own standards for more practically oriented Bachelor and more theoretically oriented Master programmes and for distance learning programmes. Different criteria and standards apply to Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration programmes.

If accreditation is refused, the programme is generally shut down by the state (private universities can continue to offer non-accredited programmes if they can attract students to them). The relationship between accreditation and state approval varies from one federal state to the next. In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, new Bachelor and Master programmes cannot be submitted for state approval until they have been accredited by an agency which in turn has been approved by the Accreditation Council. Other federal states do not impose this condition.

Therese Steffen Gerber

## Medicine and public health

The accreditation of training programmes in the field of medicine and public health follows a similar approach in Europe and the USA, comprising self-evaluation, external evaluation by a peer group and a decision on accreditation by a recognized accreditation organization or authority. In some cases the accreditation procedure is not started until the programme in question has met certain conditions. The details of the criteria used for evaluation vary, but they all cover the same general areas:

- Mission statement and educational objectives
- Structure, integration and orientation of programme
- Students
- Examinations, evaluation of students
- Evaluation of training provided
- Resources

The management and organization of the institution offering the programme are also evaluated in many instances. Accreditation of medical programmes places particular emphasis on a close correlation between theory and practical application in the hospital setting, interdisciplinarity, close links between training and research, and the acquisition of skills to facilitate life-long learning, communication and teamwork. The inclusion of special areas of medicine – ethics, geriatrics, palliative medicine, preventive medicine, complementary medicine, evidence-based medicine, environmental medicine, health legislation and health economics – in training programmes is increasingly becoming a requirement.

In 1999 the faculties of medicine in Switzerland carried out transverse pilot accreditation of their training programmes based on the procedures, criteria and standards in the guidelines drawn up by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in the USA and the results produced by the Fleiner II Commission.

Karl Zbinden-Bärtschi

## Universities of applied science

### Universities of applied science (UAS)

In 1998 the Federal Council granted provisional approval for the establishment and operation of six universities of applied science (UAS) in Switzerland. This approval for a limited duration (1998–2003) is subject to conditions, compliance with which will pave the way to final approval for these institutions. The law on the UAS (FHSG, SR/RS 414.71) charges the Federal Commission on Universities of Applied Science (EFHK) – the advisory body to the Federal Council and the Federal Department of Economics (EVD) – with the task of ascertaining whether these quality-related and formal conditions have been met. In June 1998 this commission presented its concept for quality management. The model consists of three elements: meta-evaluation (evaluation of the quality management system) and formal scrutiny (examination of the environment in which the system is implemented and the conditions imposed by the Federal Council), peer review (examination of scientific quality), and the definition of quality indicators. The Federal Office of Vocational Training

and Technology (BBT) and the EFHK have assigned the operational aspects of the evaluation by a peer group to a task force; the other two parts of the procedure are implemented directly by their own offices.

This broadly based evaluation and control procedure was implemented in the course of 2001. The results will be submitted in a final report by the EFHK to the Federal Council which in turn will issue recommendations for the accreditation of the UAS in 2003.

Annick Weizmann

### **2.2.1 Summary**

The USA, in particular, has a long tradition of accrediting vocational training programmes and institutions (e.g. accreditation of programmes in the field of engineering by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology – ABET). Such systems were not introduced in Europe until the 1990s. The best-known accreditation organization that operates throughout Europe is the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) which has been evaluating and accrediting institutions that provide training in the management sciences since 1997.

All the profession-specific accreditation systems examined in this report have a strong practical orientation, as evidenced by the choice of profession-specific evaluation criteria and the selection of peers.

The quality criteria employed by the profession-specific accreditation bodies are very similar to those used by the national bodies, although the standards clearly reflect the requirements of the business environment and the profession in question. Profession-specific accreditation procedures place an emphasis on the content of teaching and study programmes that is almost absent from the more structurally oriented evaluation criteria used by the country-specific accreditation bodies. In some of the profession-specific accreditation systems considered here, the accreditation process is preceded by a preliminary examination, although the further course of the procedure is then identical to the systems used by the country-specific accreditation and evaluation bodies.

Guidelines are currently being drawn up in Switzerland. It should be ensured that they include both primary criteria and profession-specific criteria which reflect the special orientation of a study programme or educational institution.

Systematic peer review of the more than 200 study programmes offered by the seven UAS in Switzerland was undertaken in 2001. The evaluation procedures and criteria employed were similar to those used by the institutions mentioned above. This will facilitate the planned integration of UAS accreditation into the mandate of the OAQ.

### 3. Employees at the OAQ business office

#### Director

##### **Dr. Rolf Heusser**

Born in 1958 in Zurich. Studied medicine at Zurich University. Post-graduate specialization in preventive medicine and public health completed in 1990. From 1988 senior physician at the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPMZ) at Zurich University. 1991–2001: head of the “Inter-university postgraduate programme in public health”. Member of the teaching commission in the faculty of medicine at Zurich University. Lecturer at Zurich University since 1995. Took up position with OAQ in August 2001.

#### Administrative staff in the secretariat

##### **Martina Schwarzmann**

Born in 1970 in Berne. 1987–1990: commercial training in the real estate field. 1990–2001: clerical position at the Association Compensation Fund for Dairy and Agricultural Organizations, Berne. Took up position with OAQ in August 2001.

##### **Lotti Zahler**

Born in 1952 in Ins. 1968–1971: business college in Berne. 1971–1990: worked in business-related positions in a number of companies. 1990–1999: clerical position at the Swiss Veterinary Society (GTS), Berne. Took up position with OAQ in October 2001.

#### Scientific collaborators employed since the start of October 2001

##### **Dr. Isabelle Dustin**

Born in 1956 in Brussels. Degree in materials engineering from the Swiss Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), certificate from the School of Higher Commercial Studies (Lausanne University) and doctorate in technical sciences. Research work at the EPFL, at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY, USA) and Lausanne University. Applied research contracts for various companies; taught at the School of Engineering in the Canton of Vaud and at the EPFL from 1984 to 2000.

##### **Dr. Sylvie Fasel Berger**

Born in 1969 in Romont. Degree in political economics from Fribourg University in 1993, doctorate in 2001. 1994–2001: diploma assistant at Freiburg University (international economics) and at the School of Higher Commercial Studies (HEC) in Lausanne in 1995. Completion of doctoral thesis during this period. Various contracts for private companies.

##### **Dr. Therese Steffen Gerber**

Born in 1966 in Berne. 1986–1994: studied Swiss history, contemporary general history and political science at Berne University. Degree in 1994, doctorate in Swiss history in 2000. 1994–2001: research assistant working on “Diplomatic documents in Switzerland”. An author of the Encyclopaedia of Swiss History since 1994.

##### **Annick Weizmann, lic. phil.**

Born in 1971 in Geneva. Studied philosophy, Hebraic language and religious history at Geneva University. 1999: lic. phil. I degree. 1993–2001: worked for charitable organizations and taught. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis in philosophy.

**Dr. Karl Zbinden-Bärtschi**

Born in 1952 in Berne. 1972–1978: studied zoology, botany and chemistry at Berne University. Degree and doctorate in biology. 1970–2001: independent research and development work in sensory physiology (bioacoustics) in Berne and London. Establishment and management of the bat-protection information office in the Canton of Berne. Taught and researched in medical physiology at the Institute of Physiology at Berne University. 1992–2001: planned and coordinated the reformed study programme in medicine at Berne University. Trained tutors in PBL (problem-based learning).

**4. The Scientific Advisory Board****Prof. Dr. Marie Theres Fögen, President**

Born in 1946 in Lüdinghausen, Germany. 1966–1970: studied law at the universities in Frankfurt am Main and Munich. First state law examination in 1970, second in 1975, doctorate in 1973, professorial thesis accepted in the Department of Law at Frankfurt am Main University in 1993. Full professor of Roman law, civil law and comparative law at Zurich University since 1995. Director of the Max Planck Institute of European Legal History in Frankfurt am Main since 2001.

**Prof. Dr. Ruedi Imbach**

Born in 1946 in Sursee, Switzerland. 1967–1971; studied philosophy and the history of philosophy at Fribourg University. Degree in 1971, doctorate in 1975, professorial thesis in philosophy accepted at the University of Fribourg in 1979. Full professor in the faculty of theology and philosophy at Fribourg University since 1985. Professor of medieval philosophy at Paris IV University (Sorbonne) since 2000.

**Prof. Dr. Jan De Maeseneer**

Born in 1952 in Gent, Belgium. Studied medicine at Gent University. MD in 1977, Ph.D. at Gent University in 1989. Head of the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care at Gent University since 1991. Member of the Flemish Health Council since 1997.

**Prof. Dr. Martine Rahier**

Born in 1954 in Brussels, Belgium. Studied agronomic engineering at the Free University in Brussels. Diploma in agronomic engineering with specialisation in applied zoology in 1977. Doctorate at Basle University in 1983. Professorial thesis in ecology accepted at Zurich University in 1993. Full professor of animal ecology and entomology at Neuchâtel University since 1994. President of the board of trustees of the Swiss Centre for Fauna Cartography (SZKF) since 2001.

**Prof. Dr. Dominique de Werra**

Born in 1942 in St. Maurice/Sitten, Switzerland. Studied physics at the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL). Awarded an engineering diploma in physics in 1965 and a doctorate in technical sciences by the EPFL in 1969. Awarded honorary doctorates by Paris University and Poznan Technical University, Poland. Professor of Operations Research at the EPFL since 1971. 1990–2000: Vice-President of the EPFL. President of the CLUSTER (Consortium Linking Universities of Science and Technology for Education and Research) network since 2000.

## 5. Annual financial statements for 2001

### Balance sheet as at 31 December 2001

CHF

#### Assets

Current accounts	216'167.11
Post office accounts	5'000.00
Prepaid expenses	27'319.35
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>248'486.46</b>

#### Liabilities

Borrowings	226'120.00
<b>Total borrowings</b>	<b>226'120.00</b>
Disposable profit	22'366.46 *
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>248'486.46</b>

\* Application to the General Meeting of the Swiss University  
Conference regarding the use of the disposable profit: 50% federal government, 50% university cantons.

### Income statement 1 August 2001 to 31 December 2001

CHF

#### Expenditure

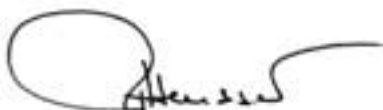
Personnel expenses including social security	250'488.21
Public relations project, website	129'153.20

#### Operating expenses

Rent/refurbishment	64'124.95
Furnishing	156'020.85
Hardware/software	183'592.55
Operating expenses	60'703.23
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>844'082.99</b>
Income surplus	22'366.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>866'449.45</b>

#### Income

Contributions from the cantons	
BS	44'496.00
BE	65'050.00
FR	40'205.00
GE	77'270.00
VD	49'102.00
NE	18'121.00
SG	19'702.00
TI	5'108.00
ZH	109'946.00
Federal contribution	429'000.00
Interest income	8'449.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>866'449.45</b>



Dr. Rolf Heusser, Berne

## 5.1. Auditors' report

EIDGENÖSSISCHE FINANZKONTROLLE  
CONTRÔLE FÉDÉRAL DES FINANCES  
CONTROLLO FEDERALE DELLE FINANZE  
CONTROLLA FEDERALE DA FINANZAS  
MONBIJOUSTRASSE 45, CH-3003 BERN



Reg. Nr. 2203/969.00.1.2

# **Bericht der Revisionsstelle**

## **an die Mitglieder der Schweizerischen Universitätskonferenz**

Als Revisionsstelle haben wir die Buchführung und die Jahresrechnung (Bilanz und Erfolgsrechnung) für das erste Geschäftsjahr (umfassend den Zeitraum vom 1. August 2001 bis 31. Dezember 2001) des Organs für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen geprüft.

Für die Jahresrechnung ist die Geschäftsstelle des Organs für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen verantwortlich, während unsere Aufgabe darin besteht, diese zu prüfen und zu beurteilen. Wir bestätigen, dass wir die gesetzlichen Anforderungen hinsichtlich Befähigung und Unabhängigkeit erfüllen.

Unsere Prüfung erfolgte nach den Grundsätzen des schweizerischen Berufsstandes, wonach eine Prüfung so zu planen und durchzuführen ist, dass wesentliche Fehlaussagen in der Jahresrechnung mit angemessener Sicherheit erkannt werden. Wir prüften die Posten und Angaben der Jahresrechnung mittels Analysen und Erhebungen auf der Basis von Stichproben. Ferner beurteilten wir die Anwendung der massgebenden Rechnungslegungsgrundsätze, die wesentlichen Bewertungsentscheide sowie die Darstellung der Jahresrechnung als Ganzes. Wir sind der Auffassung, dass unsere Prüfung eine ausreichende Grundlage für unser Urteil bildet.

Gemäss unserer Beurteilung entsprechen die Buchführung und die Jahresrechnung sowie der Antrag über die Verwendung des Bilanzgewinnes dem schweizerischen Gesetz, der Vereinbarung zwischen dem Bund und den Universitätskantonen über die Zusammenarbeit im universitären Hochschulbereich sowie der Geschäftsordnung des Organs für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizer Hochschulen. Wir empfehlen, die vorliegende Jahresrechnung zu genehmigen.

Bern, 27. Februar 2002

EIDGENÖSSISCHE FINANZKONTROLLE

Christoph Mücher  
Mandatsleiter  
Dipl. Wirtschaftsprüfer

Roger Achermann  
Revisionsleiter  
Dipl. Wirtschaftsprüfer

## 6. Budget for 2002

<b>Personnel expenses including social security</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Post of Director	
Scientific collaborators	
Secretariat and translations	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>972'000</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Public relations</b>	
Public relations, website	75'000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>75'000</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Accreditation</b>	
Cost of peers/experts	450'000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>450'000</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Operating expenses</b>	
Rent	74'000
Furnishing	15'000
Hardware/software	25'000
Operating expenses	88'000
Miscellaneous/contingency	50'000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>252'000</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1'749'000</b>

## 7. The tasks facing the Centre in 2002

### 7.1 Accreditation

Accreditation will continue to be the major focus of our activities. Approval of the "Guidelines for Academic Accreditation in Switzerland" by the Swiss University Conference (SUK) in late summer of 2002 will be of central importance.

The tools needed for accreditation, such as the guidelines for self-evaluation and peer review, the list of assessment criteria and the related standards, will be available by this time. The first accreditations are planned for August. The experience gained in this initial phase will be evaluated towards the end of the year, and the results will assist in the development of definitive rules for accreditation. We received applications for accreditation from several private institutions and study programmes at an early stage of our work, and are confident that the universities will follow suit and also seek accreditation. It is important for us to be able to evaluate suitable candidates if possible at all levels of accreditation (institutions/faculties, study programmes) so that the new accreditation tools can be optimized.

### 7.2 Quality assurance/evaluation

The second main thrust of our work is continuous collaboration with the quality assurance and evaluation managers at Switzerland's universities. The objective of this collaboration is to support the universities in their own evaluation efforts and to harmonize their work with the evaluations carried out for accreditation purposes.

A meeting of national and international quality assurance and evaluation managers is planned for the autumn of 2002. Its main purpose will be an exchange of experience and to provide an opportunity for networking.

There are also plans to lay the foundations of a national benchmarking project in teaching and research during 2002. The universities will be the main players in this project; the OAQ is willing to take on the role of organizer and coordinator.

### 7.3 International collaboration

Since the work done by the OAQ is based on international guidelines, practices and models, it will be maintaining contacts established with international partner organizations during 2001. Visits to accreditation and quality assurance organizations in Denmark, Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and the USA are planned. These contacts are of major importance for the OAQ. It needs to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks associated with practices in other countries so that experience gained in these countries can be drawn on when activities and tools for Switzerland are developed and refined.

### 7.4 Communication and information

The OAQ is planning to pursue an active programme of transparent and continuous public relations and media activities; it intends to fulfil its mandate to provide information and to communicate with relevant partners and target groups. Against this background, a concept for public relations and media activities at the OAQ will be drawn up by June 2002 and subsequently implemented in conjunction with external communication specialists.

By May, specialists in corporate design and corporate identity will have developed a coherent visual presentation for the OAQ (logo, internet presence, graphic concept for publications, etc.).

## **Mandate and functions of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities**

The purpose of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung, OAQ) is to underpin and promote the quality of teaching and studies at the universities in Switzerland. The OAQ fulfils the following tasks at the behest of the Swiss University Conference (SUK):

- It defines quality assurance requirements and examines regularly whether these are being met.
- It makes proposals for an accreditation procedure for institutions which apply for the accreditation of individual study programmes or the entire institution; this procedure is to apply throughout Switzerland.
- It carries out accreditation of institutions which apply for this on the basis of the guidelines introduced by the Swiss University Conference.
- Its activities are guided by international practices and it participates in international collaboration programmes in the field of accreditation and quality assurance.
- It draws up recommendations for evaluations carried out by the universities on their own responsibility.
- It may carry out evaluations of specific disciplines as part of its annual programme and in consultation with the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS).

Institutions, departments and study programmes are to be accredited at the request of the universities. This is to be repeated periodically every five to seven years. The initial accreditation will be carried out in 2002. Another important task of the OAQ is to assist the universities actively in their own quality management and to offer relevant services.

### **The OAQ's mission**

#### **General principles**

The OAQ

- bases its work on international practices and research findings;
- aligns its work with developments in education policy in Switzerland and Europe;
- participates in international networks and committees;
- establishes and maintains bilateral contacts with other countries and plays an active part in cooperation projects;
- develops the accreditation system in close cooperation with the universities;
- networks and seeks consensus with national partners;
- is an independent institution;
- provides information to its partners in this process, to relevant target groups, discussion partners and the media;
- involves political decision-makers in the process and provides them with ongoing information on developments in the process and the questions it raises.

### **Specific principles**

The OAQ

- supports the pragmatic implementation of selective, innovative ideas, projects and services on a national and international level (e.g. benchmarking for Swiss universities, joint accreditation with other countries);
- pursues an active, transparent and continuous programme of PR and media activities, actively fulfils its function as a provider of information and maintains communication with the relevant target groups;
- will give itself a name and develop a corporate identity that reflect its objectives and its corporate culture;
- allows its activities to be evaluated.

### **The goals and the vision of the OAQ for 2006**

The OAQ

- is a nationally recognized and internationally networked centre of excellence for questions relating to quality management at universities.
- is an indispensable and credible partner for players involved in accreditation, evaluation and quality.
- has established a smoothly functioning and recognized system for accreditation/evaluation at Swiss universities that has an impact on the international level.
- plays a major role in Swiss education policy.