



organ für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung  
der schweizerischen hochschulen

## **OAQ Mission statement**

### **Position, goals and tasks**

The independent Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ) was established in 2001 with the task of ensuring and promoting the quality of teaching and research at Swiss universities. It is the only national organisation active in this field. Its tasks and responsibilities are defined by law.

Under the terms of the Federal Law on Financial Aid to Universities (UFG), the OAQ, on behalf of the Swiss University Conference (SUK/CUS) and for the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SBF/SER), carries out examinations of quality (accreditation of institutions and study courses, evaluation procedures, institutional audits). It defines the quality standards necessary to do this and develops guidelines and relevant tools.

Based on best international practice, OAQ procedures and their implementation focus not only on quality controls, but also on quality improvement. The Centre publishes the fundamentals and results of its work.

In carrying out its procedures, the OAQ collaborates with respected international experts from the university and quality assurance sector.

The OAQ provides services and carries out mandates for federal, cantonal and university partners.

The OAQ participates in international cooperation in the field of quality assurance and accreditation.

The OAQ organises regular international meetings on accreditation and quality assurance in cooperation with national and international partners and participates in conferences.

The OAQ provides information about accreditation and quality assurance.

Through its activities the OAQ has the following basic goals:

- to offer a form of consumer protection through transparent assessments of the quality of study courses and university performance
- to provide assistance and guidance for students, the labour market and politicians
- to achieve international recognition of Swiss accreditation decisions
- to support universities in the implementation of effective internal quality assurance systems

### **Internal organisation**

The OAQ organises and manages itself under the terms of its bylaws and has its own budget.

The office of the OAQ is supported by an international scientific advisory board which is responsible for the scientific quality of the OAQ's work.



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The OAQ team reflects the multicultural and multilingual nature of Switzerland and represents the different university disciplines and Swiss universities.

The main element of internal quality assurance is the position paper on OAQ quality principles and measures.

### **Self image, company culture**

The OAQ is a small organisation with competent and qualified staff. It has a broad range of exclusive knowledge.

OAQ management has adopted a participative style.

OAQ staff work independently according to clear job description.

The OAQ working culture is characterised by mutual respect and courteous working relations.

The OAQ is an internationally recognised agency. It submits its work to external evaluation and adheres to the Code of Good Practice of the European Consortium for Accreditation and quality assurance agencies.

### **Cooperation**

To be able to fulfil its mandate, the OAQ works closely with federal, cantonal and university partners.

The OAQ supports and advises the universities in their task of regulating internal quality assurance procedures.

The OAQ works with other European quality assurance agencies, participates actively in various international networks and concludes cooperation agreements.

### **Information and communication**

Information and communication is an integral part of the work of the OAQ and it follows an open and transparent communication policy. It communicates and publishes in all official languages in Switzerland. The OAQ makes use of several modes of communication.

### **Vision**

The OAQ is a nationally and internationally recognised competence centre for matters relating to quality assurance and quality development in the tertiary education sector.

As the only national agency of its kind, the OAQ is responsible for accreditation procedures and other quality checks throughout the Swiss university sector.

The OAQ accreditation seal is an internationally known and recognised stamp of approval.

The OAQ is listed in the European Registry of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies.



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The OAQ makes an important contribution to the strengthening of Switzerland's standing as a university centre and to the integration of Switzerland into the European Higher Education Area.

organe d'accréditation et d'assurance qualité  
des hautes écoles suisses

organo di accreditamento e di garanzia della  
qualità delle istituzioni universitarie svizzere