

o a q

swiss center of accreditation and
quality assurance in higher education

Mission Statement

organ für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung
der schweizerischen hochschulen

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



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Mission and Functions of the OAQ

The OAQ is the national Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education. It is mandated to ensure and promote the quality of teaching and research at Swiss Universities.

The OAQ's functions are regulated legally. It performs quality evaluations at Universities and university institutions for the Swiss University Conference and the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER). Specifically, this refers to the accreditation of institutions and academic study programs, evaluation procedures and institutional audits. The OAQ also effectuates procedures to accredit academic programs at Universities of applied sciences for the Federal Department of Economic Affairs. Moreover, the OAQ accredits academic programs in medical education which lead to a federal diploma. On behalf of the Federal Department of Home Affairs the OAQ performs external evaluations in the scope of accreditation procedures for the Postgraduate Medical Education. Moreover, it supports the accrediting bodies responsible for defining quality standards and guidelines while assuming sole responsibility for developing its own accompanying instruments. In the scope of its autonomous accreditation activities, the OAQ continually expands its expertise as an agency and develops its methodology.

OAQ procedures correspond with international practice and focus on quality assurance and quality improvement. The OAQ publishes the bases and results of its work and provides information on accreditation and quality assurance.

The OAQ also participates actively in the international cooperation in the area of quality assurance and accreditation. This includes the autonomous performance of procedures for system accreditation and the accreditation of academic study programs at German Universities.

Visions and Goals

When implementing its tasks, the OAQ is guided by its vision of a national and international Higher Education area in which

- Universities continuously develop and improve the quality of teaching and research;
- the prerequisites for students, teachers and researchers for studying, teaching and research are continually optimized;
- the Universities are transparent when presenting their academic programs, the performance expected from the students as well as the expected learning outcomes; and

- the Bologna process contributes to quality development by the Universities as well as to student mobility.

Against this setting, the OAQ aims to

- increase transparency in the quality of academic programs and university performance;
- contribute to aid the decision-making and orientation for students, for the employment market as well as for politicians;
- participate in endeavors to achieve overall recognition of diplomas in the European sector of higher education; and
- support the Universities in implementing an effective internal quality assurance system.

As a prerequisite to achieve this, it is imperative that the OAQ's national and international reputation is one of being an accreditation agency of high quality and that its procedures are marked by integrity.

Values and aspirations

The OAQ considers itself as being a learning organization whose organizational culture is characterized by mutual respect, mutual support and loyalty.

The OAQ sets the same high standards for its own internal work and activities as it demands from the Higher Education institutions in its procedures.

The OAQ continually reviews and improves its internal processes and how its resources are used.