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Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany

**Accreditation Council** ■■

**The German Accreditation System**



## Content

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  - II. The Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany
  - III. Stakeholders in the Accreditation System
  - IV. Quality Approach and Regulations
  - V. Challenges
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## **Competences of the German Accreditation System**

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- ❖ The Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany is, as its name implies, only responsible for quality assurance in the field of higher education.
  - ❖ It is only responsible for the accreditation of study programmes and QA systems of HEIs
  - ❖ This system has to be distinguished from
    - ❖ the institutional accreditation of private HEIs as precondition for state recognition of those institutions
    - ❖ Quality assurance in the VET sector
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## **Development of the German Accreditation System - I**

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### **1. Programme Accreditation**

#### **Historical context led to programme approach:**

- ❖ Implementation of bachelor- and master degrees
- ❖ Reform of state approval procedure
- ❖ Introduction of compulsory quality assurance

Subject matter: single study programme

Connected to state approval of study programmes

Accreditation period: 7 years (first accreditation 5 years)

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## **Development of the German Accreditation System – II**

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### **2. System Accreditation**

#### **Reasons for implementation:**

- ❖ Programme approach seen as burdensome and costly for HEI,
- ❖ especially for big universities
- ❖ Tendency of persistence of programmes between accreditation procedures
- ❖ Little contribution to internal QA

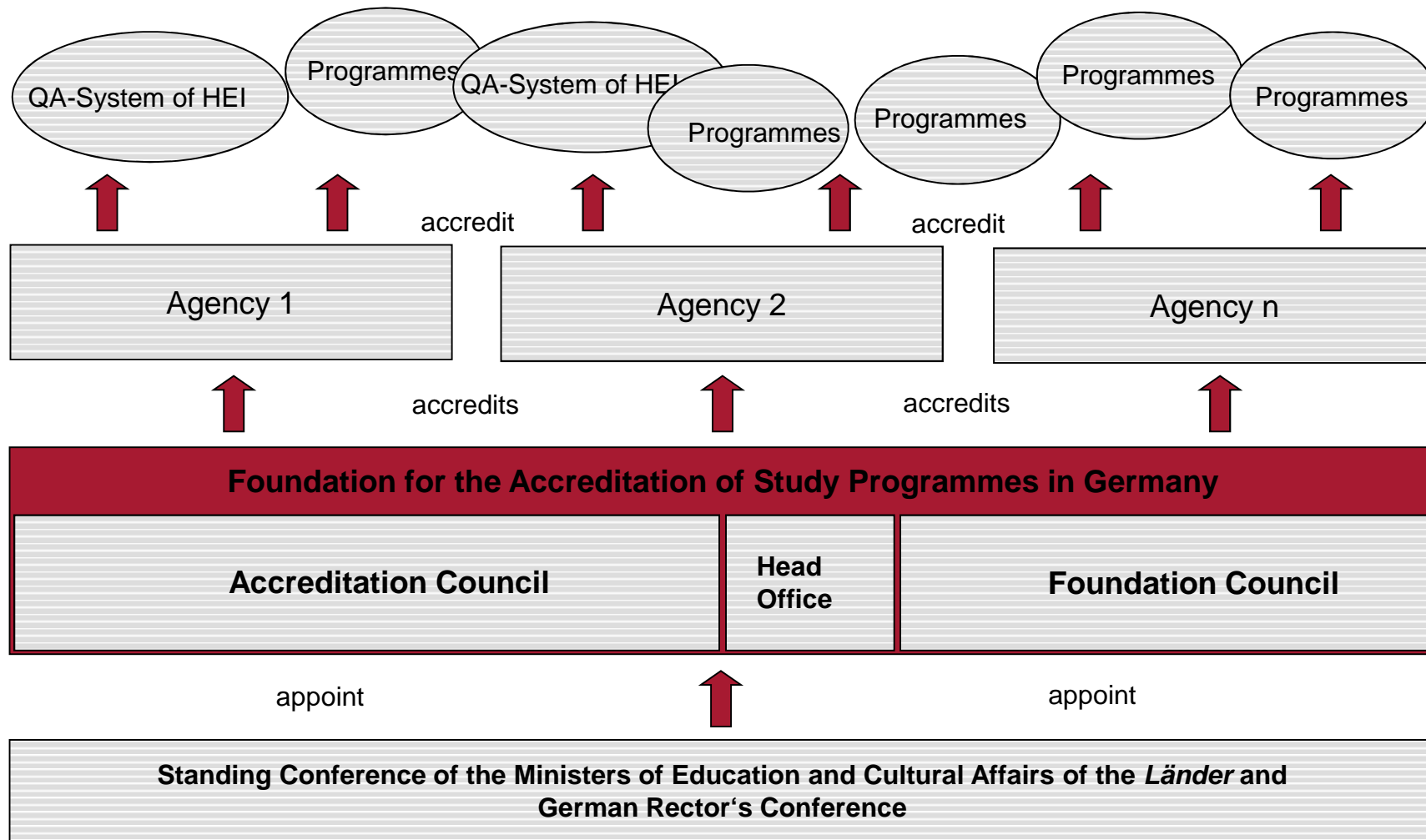
Subject matter: internal quality assurance system of HEI;

Effects of decision: study programmes of HEI are accredited after having passed through the internal QA system

Accreditation period: 8 years (first accreditation 6 years)

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## The Accreditation System in Germany – a two-tiered system



## **Multidisciplinary Accreditation Agencies in Germany**

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<b>ACQUIN</b>	Accreditation-, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute
<b>AQAS</b>	Agency for Quality Assurance in the course of the Accreditation of Study Programmes
<b>AQ Austria</b>	Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria
<b>evalag</b>	Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg
<b>AAQ</b>	Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities
<b>ZEVA</b>	Central Evaluations- and Accreditation Agency Hannover

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## **Discipline-oriented Accreditation Agencies in Germany**

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- AHPGS** Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Special Education, Care, Health Sciences and Social Work
- AKAST** Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical courses of Studies in Germany
- ASIIN** Accreditation Agency specialised in accrediting Degree Programs from the fields of Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics.
- FIBAA** Foundation for Business Administration Accreditation
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## Tasks of the Foundation

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According to the Foundation law the foundation:



- Decides on the accreditation of agencies
  - Decides on accreditation criteria and procedural rules
  - Monitors the decisions of the agencies
  - Ensures fair competition among the agencies
  - Fosters international cooperation and recognition of foreign accreditation decisions
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## The Foundation

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### **Board**

Executes the Accreditation Council's resolutions

### **Accreditation Council**

Is essentially responsible for performing the  
Foundation tasks  
makes decisions on all matters of the Foundation

### **Foundation Council**

Monitors the lawfulness and efficiency  
of the foundation activities carried out  
by the Accreditation Council and the  
Board

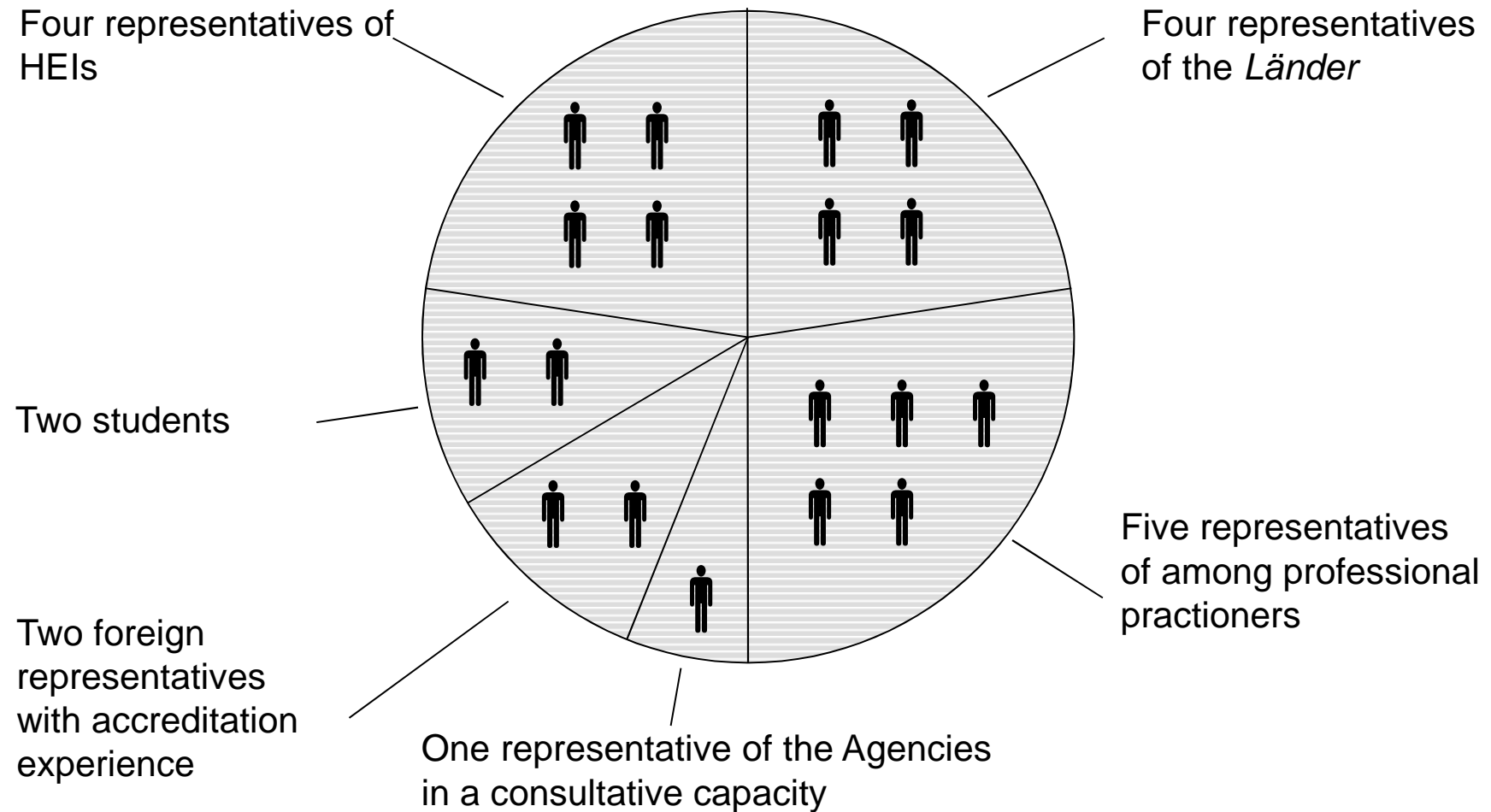
### **Head Office**

Supports the execution of Foundation business

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## Composition of the Accreditation Council

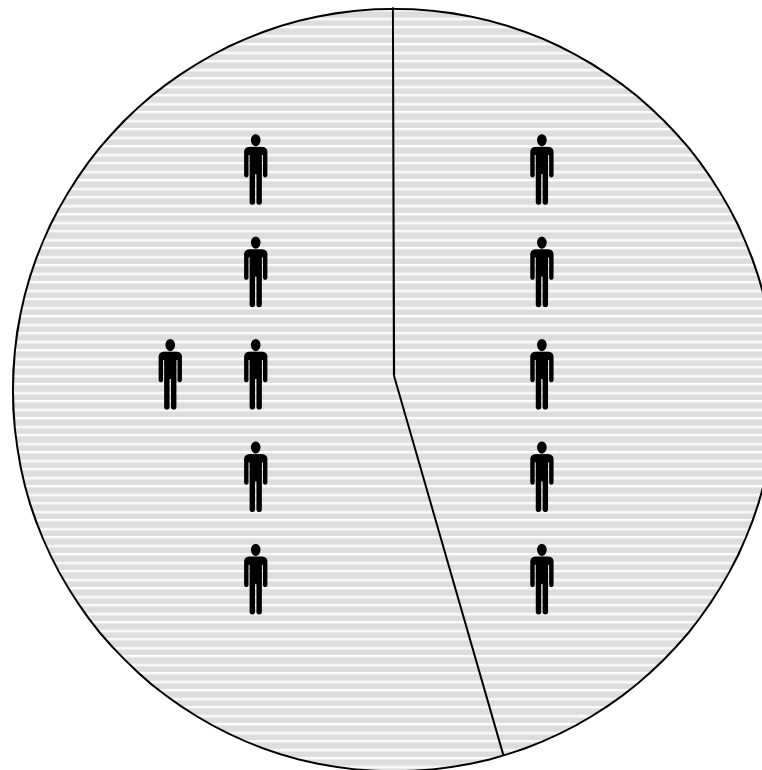
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## Composition of the Foundation Council

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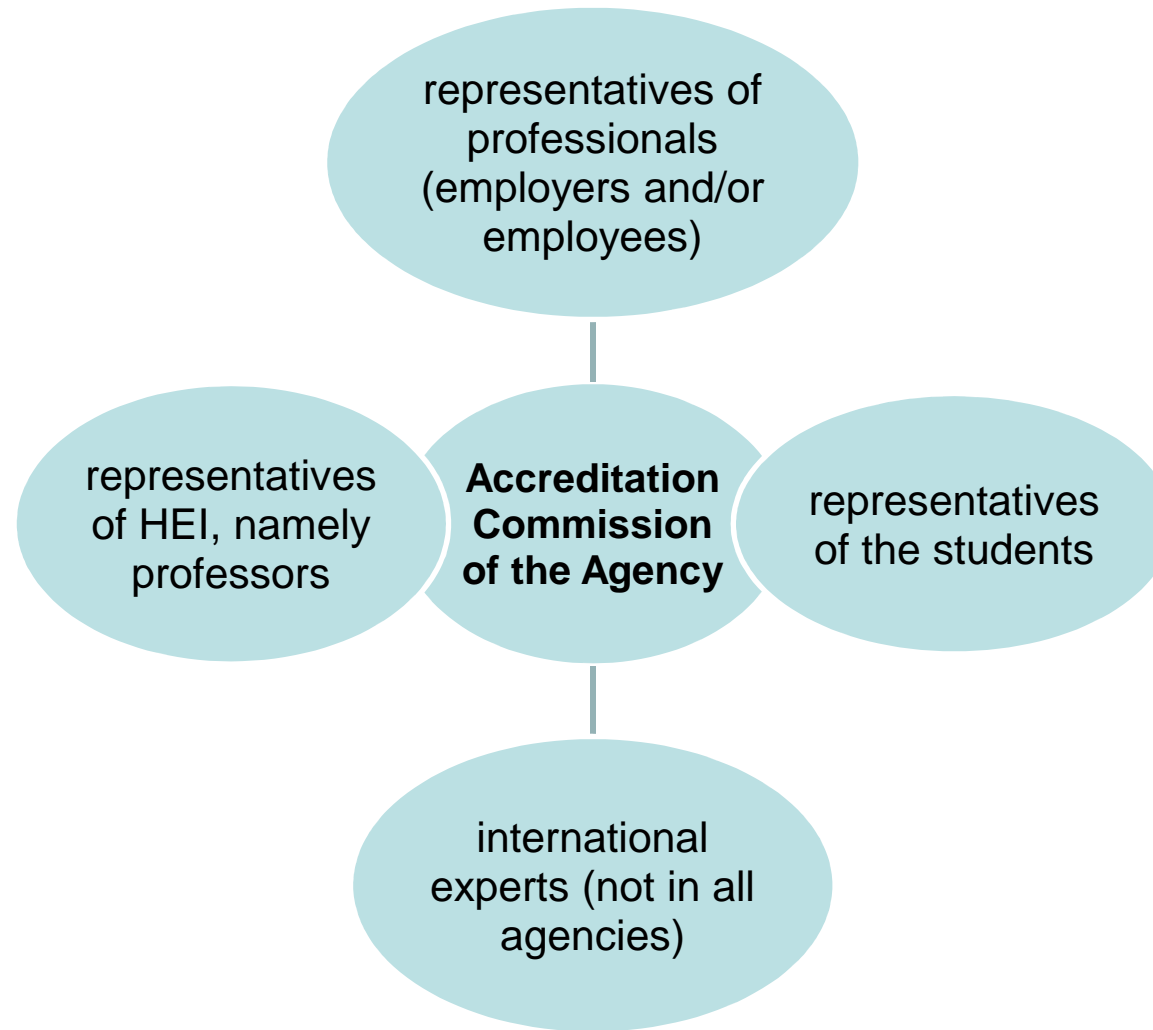
Six representatives  
of the *Länder*



Five representatives of  
the German Rector's  
Conference

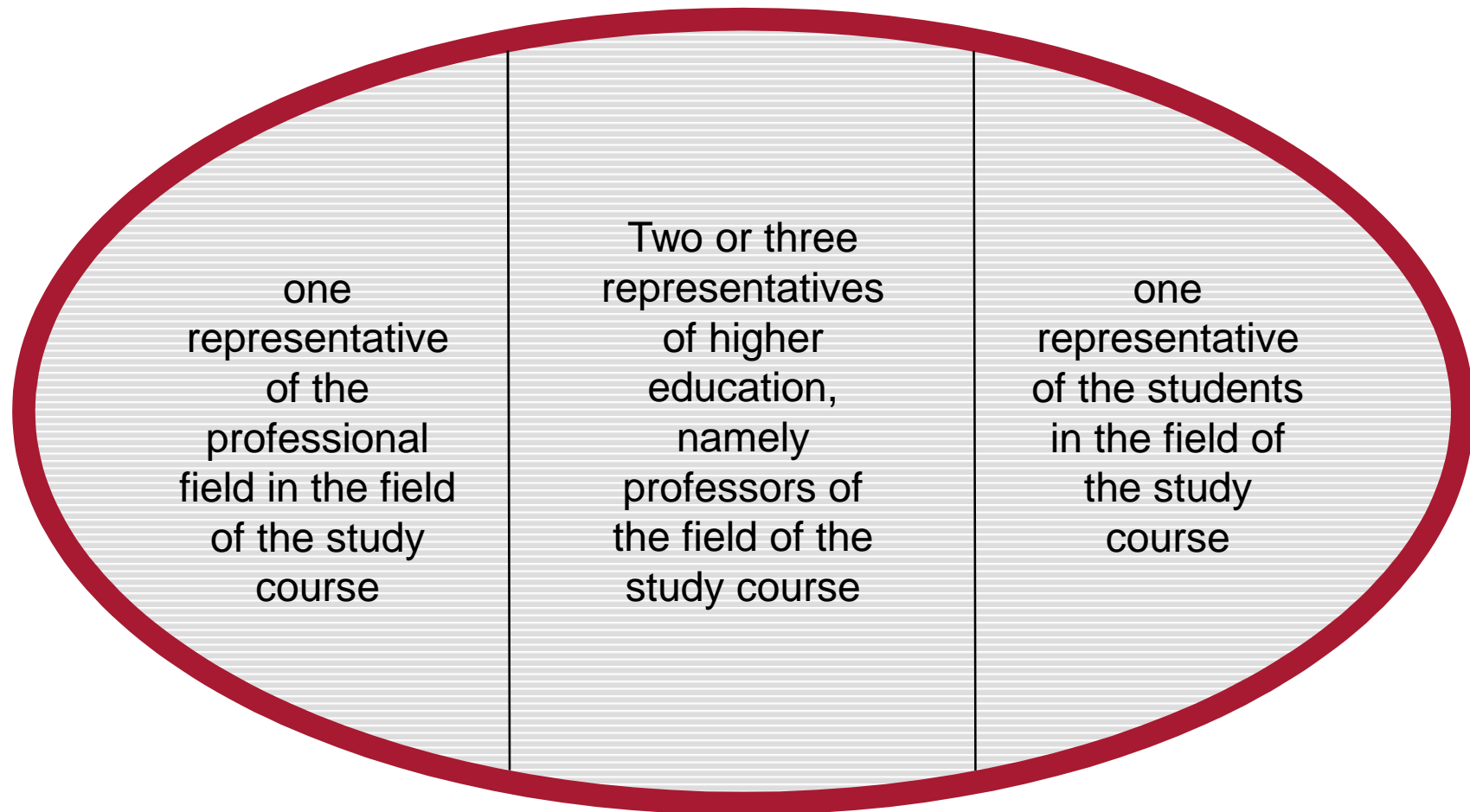
## Participation in the Agencies

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## Participation in the peer groups

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## International Framework

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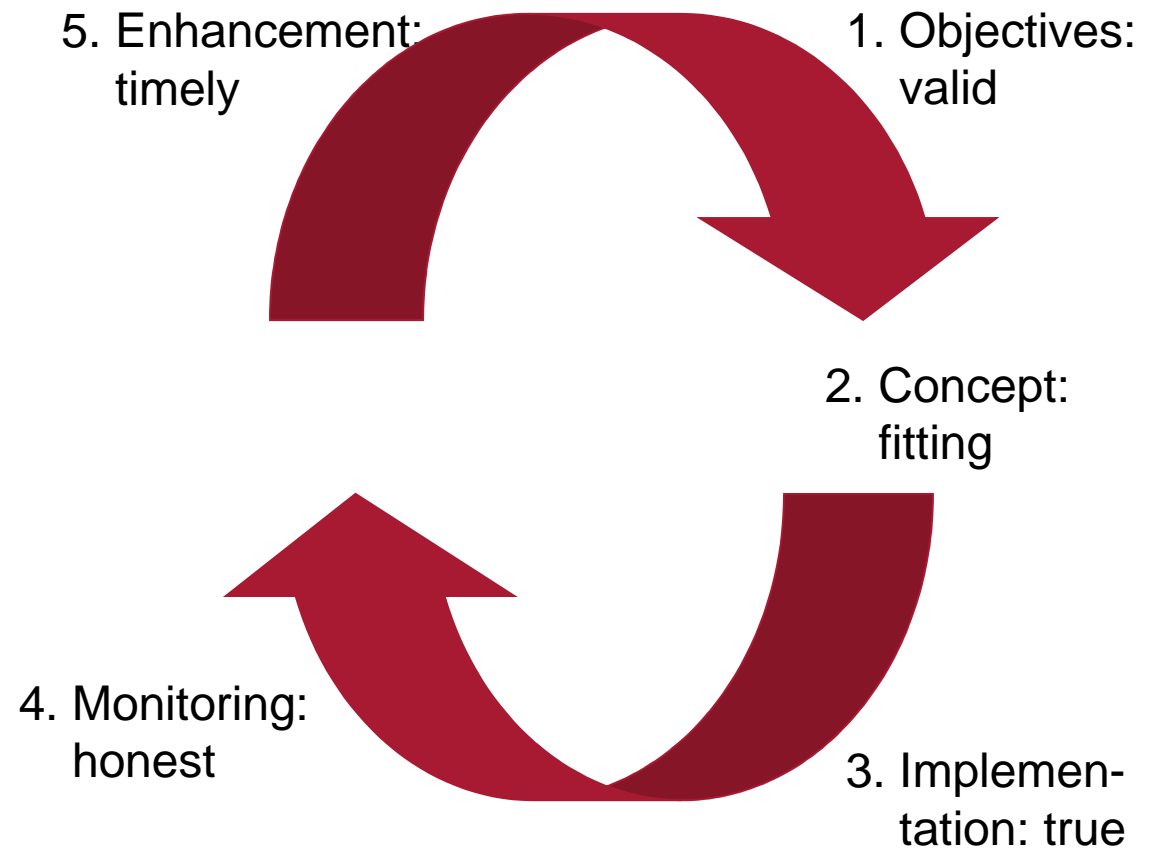
- ❖ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
  - ❖ Bologna Principles (Declarations / Communiqués)
  - ❖ Lisbon Convention
  - ❖ ECTS / Diploma Supplement
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## The Quality Approach of Accreditation

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### The Quality Circle

The Accreditation Council's concept of accreditation is based on the **fitness of** and **fitness for purpose** approach: the higher education institution decides on the learning outcomes and has to prove that concept and implementation are conform to the intended outcomes; it has to monitor and enhance its programmes if necessary





## **Rules of the Accreditation Council for the Accreditation of Agencies**

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### **-ESG**

#### **-National Criteria**

- Application of rules of the foundation
- Separate legal entity
- Non-profit orientation
- Accreditation across types of HEIs and across disciplines
- Organisational Structure/representation of all peer groups in agency bodies
- Peer groups
- Majority of professors in bodies and peer groups
- Publication of internal QA procedures and of complaints and appeals procedures
- Cooperations
- Use of German language
- Internal QA systems includes internal and external feedback mechanisms

## **Criteria for the Accreditation of Study Programmes (Programme Accreditation)**

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### **Resolution of the Accreditation Council (20.02.2013)**

- 2.1: Qualification Objectives of the Study Programme Concept
  - 2.2: Conceptional Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies
  - 2.3: Study Programme Concept
  - 2.4: Academic Feasibility
  - 2.5: Examination System
  - 2.6: Programme-related Co-operations
  - 2.7: Facilities
  - 2.8: Transparency and Documentation
  - 2.9: Quality Assurance and Further Development
  - 2.10: Study Programmes with a Special Profile Demand
  - 2.11: Gender Justice and Equal Opportunities
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## **Criteria for System Accreditation**

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**Resolution of the Accreditation Council (08.10.2007, amended on 20.02.2013)**

- 4.1: Definition of the subject matter
  - 4.2 and 4.3: Prerequisites for admittance
  - 6.1: Qualification objectives
  - 6.2: Internal Management in Teaching and Learning
  - 6.3: Internal Quality Assurance
  - 6.4: Reporting system and Data Collection
  - 6.5: Responsibilities
  - 6.6: Documentation
  - 6.7: Cooperation
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## **Procedure of Programme Accreditation (main issues)**

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### **I. Application:**

Application (self-report, presentation of the study programme, documenting compliance with the criteria for the accreditation of study programmes)

### **II. Evaluation Procedure:**

- 1) Appointment of an expert group (involves the relevant stakeholder)
- 2) Preparation of the experts for the accreditation procedure
- 3) On-site visit

### **III. Decision:**

1. Decision of the commission of the agency:
    - a) accreditation
    - b) accreditation under condition
    - c) denial of accreditation
    - d) Withholding of the procedure
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## **Procedure of System Accreditation (main issues)**

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### **I. Application:**

- 1) Preparatory conversation (Agency and Higher Education Institution HEI)
- 2) Application (brief descriptions of the institution and QMS)
- 3) Preliminary evaluation (prerequisites of HEI for the admittance)

### **II. Evaluation Procedure:**

- 1) Appointment of an expert group for the system accreditation (done by the agency)
- 2) 1<sup>st</sup> on-site visit (collecting information, checking completeness of documents)
- 3) 2<sup>nd</sup> on-site visit (critical analysis, conversations with HEI, samples)

### **III. Decision:**

1. Preparation of a final report (taking into account samples)
  2. Decision of the commission of the agency:
    - a) accreditation
    - b) accreditation under condition
    - c) denial of accreditation
    - d) Withholding of the procedure
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## **Decision of Germany's Constitutional Court on Accreditation**

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The Germany's Constitutional Court promulgated a decision on accreditation:

- External quality assurance, as accreditation, is compatible with Germany's Basic Law that protects academic freedom
- But more issues have to be dealt with in Acts adopted by parliaments
- This has to be done until end of 2017

Therefore:

- The 16 German states who are in charge of higher education will have to make decisions
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More information available at:

[www.akkreditierungsrat.de](http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de)

[lantermann@akkreditierungsrat.de](mailto:lantermann@akkreditierungsrat.de)

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