

Section 11.

Establishment and discontinuation of FH Upper Austria degree programmes and certificate programmes

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1. General

This section of the statutes describes the application and accreditation procedure for new degree programmes and certificate programmes (programme accreditation), and for submitting applications for modifications to existing degree programmes and certificate programmes offered by the Center of Lifelong Learning (CoL³).

In the interests of efficiency, and in order to achieve FH Upper Austria's common goals, all key steps in the procedure pursuant to the *Fachhochschulgesetz* (University of Applied Sciences Act) are always taken by mutual agreement of the Academic Board and the provider.

2. Establishment of degree programmes

- (1) Applications for and accreditation of new degree programmes (application to AQ Austria for programme accreditation)

The steps to be followed for applications for and accreditation of new degree programmes can be found in the Applications for and Accreditation of Degree Programmes process description.

The key steps in the procedure are outlined below:

1. Ideation

Proposals for degree programmes are usually developed by an informal committee made up of representatives of FH Upper Austria and other interested parties.

2. Mutual agreement between the provider and the Academic Board (pursuant to section 10[3][4] University of Applied Sciences Act) regarding

- Integration of the programme into the overall strategic concept
- Assignment to a faculty
- Appointment of the head of the development team to be established, based on a proposal from the relevant dean's office

3. Preparation of short application

- The short application is prepared by the future head of the development team on the basis of the current template and submitted to the provider through the dean's office; the provider then submits the short application to the Academic Board.
- The decision as to whether to approve/reject the short application is taken by mutual agreement of the provider and the Academic Board.

4. Establishing a development team

The head of the development team selects the team members in accordance with the programme focuses and the topics to be addressed. The make-up of the team is approved by the Academic Board, for quality assurance purposes (verification of correct formal composition). The composition of the development team must satisfy the requirements of AQ Austria and the University of Applied Sciences Act.

5. Preparation of the full application in accordance with the *FH-Akkreditierungsverordnung* (University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Order), based on the latest sample application Coordination with the provider at an early stage regarding costing (controlling) is essential.

6. Submission of the application to the Head of the Academic Board through the relevant dean's office

The Academic Board either gives its approval immediately, issues instructions to make changes before the application is resubmitted, or rejects the application.

7. Approval and submission to AQ Austria by the provider

3. Modification of degree programmes

(1) General

There are generally two types of degree programme modifications that require an application:

1. Modifications relevant to the official accreditation notification (require a decision by AQ Austria – see point 2)
2. Modifications not relevant to the official accreditation notification that fall within the remit of the Academic Board (by mutual agreement with the provider) (see point 3).

In addition, the programme director can independently make minor modifications to degree programme contents that only affect the curriculum (see point 4).

(2) Changes relevant to the official accreditation notification

University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Order section 14: Changes relevant to the official accreditation notification

(1) Changes of institutional accreditations and programme accreditations require in any case an amendment of the official notification, should the changes relate to the following characteristics:

1. change of the name of the legal entity of the university of applied sciences or changes to the legal structure of the legal entity of the university of applied sciences;
2. changes to the curriculum, resulting in significant changes to the profile and the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme, modification of the study format, the total workload (in ECTS credits), the duration (in academic years, semesters), the language and/or the exact wording of the academic degree to be awarded (including its abbreviation) for the degree programme(s);
3. changes regarding the number of study places of the degree programme(s);
4. change of the site or sites at which the degree programme is or the degree programmes are offered;

In these cases the Board shall decide on the procedure according to § 4 para. 4.

(2) The Board of AQ Austria must be informed of the following:

1. change to the name of the degree programme, provided that it is not the result of changes to the curriculum which significantly change the profile and the intended learning outcomes;
2. change to the name of the university of applied sciences.

In these cases, the official notification is amended ex officio.

Procedure for modifications relevant to the official accreditation notification:

1. The modification is drawn up and sent to the Academic Board and the provider through the dean's office. A full application does not have to be prepared in every case (consultation with the Academic Board and the provider of FH Upper Austria in advance is necessary); reasons must be given for making the specific modifications.
2. The Academic Board examines the application and decides by mutual agreement with the provider whether it can be submitted to AQ Austria in accordance with section 3 University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Order.
3. AQ Austria examines and evaluates the application in accordance with the University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Order and issues its decision in the form of an official notice.

Content of applications for modifications that are relevant to the official accreditation notification:

The latest version of the sample application must be used when preparing the full application. The Excel file containing the curriculum matrix must be attached to the application.

(3) Modifications not relevant to the official accreditation notification

All modifications that are not covered by point 2 above are not relevant to the official accreditation notification and are therefore within the remit of the Academic Board.

Typical examples of such modifications include:

- Adaptation/modernisation of course contents (and related changes to course titles)
- Organisational changes in teaching operations, e.g. postponement of courses between semesters
- Changes to individual course types, or
- Changes in the number of teaching hours per week or ECTS credits for individual courses

Procedure for modifications not relevant to the official accreditation notification:

1. The modifications are drafted by the programme director and forwarded to the dean's office of the faculty concerned for review. The Excel file containing the curriculum matrix must be attached to the application.
2. The dean's office reviews the application. If it approves the application, the dean's office forwards the application to the Academic Board.
3. The Academic Board must either approve the modifications (by mutual agreement with the provider), request that changes be made, or reject the application within two months (excluding August). The programme director and the dean's office of the faculty concerned will be informed of the decision.

(4) Procedure for minor modifications to course contents

Minor modifications to module and/or course contents (excluding changes to their titles) that become necessary due to (technological) advances and/or new legal frameworks or social conditions, as well as additions to and/or updates of lists of recommended literature, can be made independently by programme directors.

For these purposes, the procedure described in section 3(3) above does not have to be followed. However, such minor, content-related modifications must be recorded in the degree programme accreditation application and incorporated into the next application for modifications.

4. Discontinuation of degree programmes

(1) An application to discontinue a degree programme can be initiated by:

- the provider (e.g. due to a lack of funding or demand, or for reasons related to a faculty's strategy)
- the Academic Board (e.g. for quality assurance reasons)

The Academic Board will consider the application, taking into account the opinions of the provider, the programme director concerned and the elected programme representatives. The Academic Board will discuss these opinions and give reasons if they are not taken into account.

The Academic Board will take decisions on discontinuing degree programmes by mutual agreement with the provider. If no agreement can be reached, a casting vote will be used. If the provider proposed discontinuing the programme, the provider will have the casting vote; if the proposal was made by the Academic Board, the Academic Board will have the casting vote.

If a programme is discontinued, steps must be taken to ensure that students who have started the programme are able to complete their studies within the specified programme duration. For students repeating a programme and those on extended leave, alternative arrangements must be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Establishment of continuing higher education programmes

(1) Applications for establishment of continuing higher education programmes pursuant to section 9 University of Applied Sciences Act must be submitted to the Academic Board using the

corresponding sample application; the Academic Board will either approve or reject the application:

1. The head of the Centre of Lifelong Learning (CoL³) submits the application for establishment of a continuing higher education programme to the provider and the Academic Board. Such applications must include all partnership agreements if the programme will be held in cooperation with external partners.
 2. The application will be assessed by the relevant committee of the Academic Board.
 3. Based on a recommendation of the competent committee and by mutual agreement with the provider, within two months the Academic Board will either decide to approve establishment, reject it or request additions and/or amendments to the application.
- (2) If the application relates to a continuing higher education programme for which an academic title will be awarded that is also awarded in regular degree programmes (e.g. MSc, MA, DI), the continuing higher education programme must correspond to a regular master's degree programme in terms of content, scope and entry requirements. As with applications for establishment of degree programmes, a full application for a continuing higher education programme must be drawn up using the latest sample application for degree programmes (section 3[2] above applies by analogy).
- (3) Quality assurance in connection with establishment of a continuing higher education programme is carried out in the same way as for regular degree programmes (in particular the evaluation of teaching using LEVIS).

6. Modification of certificate programmes for further education and continuing higher education programmes

- (1) Modifications to certificate programmes for further education and continuing higher education programmes are handled analogously to modifications to degree programme applications that are not relevant to the official accreditation notification (see section 3[3] above).

7. Discontinuation of certificate programmes for further education and continuing higher education programmes

- (1) An application to discontinue a certificate programme for further education or continuing higher education programme can be initiated by:
 - the provider (e.g. due to a lack of funding or demand)
 - the Academic Board (e.g. for quality assurance reasons)

The Academic Board will consider the application, taking into account the opinions of the provider, the programme director concerned and the elected programme representatives. The Academic Board will discuss these opinions and give reasons if they are not taken into account.

The Academic Board will take decisions on discontinuing certificate programmes for further education or continuing higher education programmes by mutual agreement with the provider. If no agreement can be reached, a casting vote will be used. If the provider proposed discontinuing the programme, the provider will have the casting vote; if the proposal was made by the Academic Board, the Academic Board will have the casting vote.

If a programme is discontinued, steps must be taken to ensure that students who have started the programme are able to complete their studies within the specified programme duration.

8. Entry into force

- (1) Pursuant to the Academic Board resolution of 29 June 2022, and following approval by the provider FH OÖ Studienbetriebs GmbH, represented by the University President, the "Establishment and discontinuation of FH Upper Austria degree programmes and certificate programmes" section of the statutes will enter into force on 1 September 2022.