



## **FIBAA - international agency for the quality assurance and accreditation of programs and higher education institutions**

# **PROFILE**

## **Organisation and Activities**

March 2008

The FIBAA (Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation) is a Swiss non-profit agency for quality assurance with operative branches in Bonn (Germany) and Zurich (Switzerland). FIBAA audits, assesses and furthers private and state-approved higher education institutions and thus enhances transparency in the educational sector.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE BY ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is one of the key words on the way to a joint European sector of higher education. FIBAA places its work in the service of this process initiated by the Bologna Conference and the follow up conferences of the competent ministries. FIBAA adheres to the governmental requirements in Germany-Austria-Switzerland. Next to this, also guidelines consolidated in the European framework receive due attention. Since FIBAA was founded, the co-operation in supranational institutions as well as the practical application of jointly developed benchmarks are key elements of its philosophy and business practice. Transparent quality criteria - the basis of the accreditation processes - reflect both the status quo of science and the standards and requisites of the vocational field. Because of this the quantitative involvement of the higher education and business sectors, of scientists and corporate representatives (amongst other relevant groups in the bodies of the FIBAA) is a must.

### **FIBAA'S OBJECTIVES**

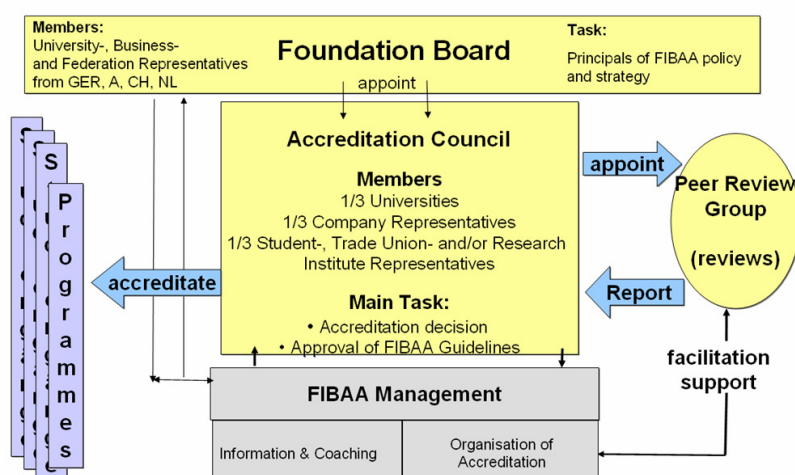
The FIBAA is an international accreditation agency mainly active in Europe. It aids higher education institutions in the further development of their bachelor-, master-, and PhD programmes. This is achieved through an intensive accreditation process involving the higher education institution. On one hand this process aims at quality improvement, on the other it aims at the accreditation of the programme. This quality process comprises the consultation to quality management, the appraisal of the program concerning its structure and contents as well as the fulfilment of

the requirements which are needed in order to bestow the FIBAA-quality seal.

FIBAA is bound to the following objectives:

1. Assurance and improvement of the quality of programmes
2. Assistance in the development of a varied range of courses
3. Making the programmes on offer more transparent for the labour market, the students, businesses, and the higher education institutions themselves
4. Co-operation in the development of the basis for the quality process in the national as well as international framework
5. Consideration of European concepts and guidelines in the accreditation process
6. Application of a combination of information-quality standard and process principle for our clients and consultants.
7. The accreditation procedure aims at the following:
  - verifying that the objectives of the programme are feasible
  - certifying that the program can be studied
  - auditing and assessing the current status quo of the scientific bases
  - appraising the value of the program for the vocational field
  - assessing the position of the modularised programme in the European, national or regional higher education framework.

## FIBAA - ORGANISATION



## ACKNOWLEDGED QUALITY LABELS

Since 2002 FIBAA has been bestowing the seal of the German Accreditation Council for academic programs. In February 2007 this

entitlement was extended by the German Accreditation Council for another five years. At the same time its scope was extended to programs in the field of law and social science.

In the Netherlands FIBAA has been acknowledged as accreditation agency by the *Nederlands-Vlamse Accreditatie Organisatie* (NVAO), in the same way FIBAA is approved as accreditation agency in Switzerland by the *Bundesamt für Berufsbildung und Technologie* (BBT).

Both national quality seals can be complimented by the internationally acknowledged FIBAA quality seal, which is offered for programs conducted outside Germany.

As an unique measure to contribute and encourage quality efforts and the pursue of excellence in academic education FIBAA awards the "premium siegel" for outstanding courses and programmes. This "premium siegel" will be bestowed in 2008 for the first time.

## **METHOD OF ACCREDITATION**

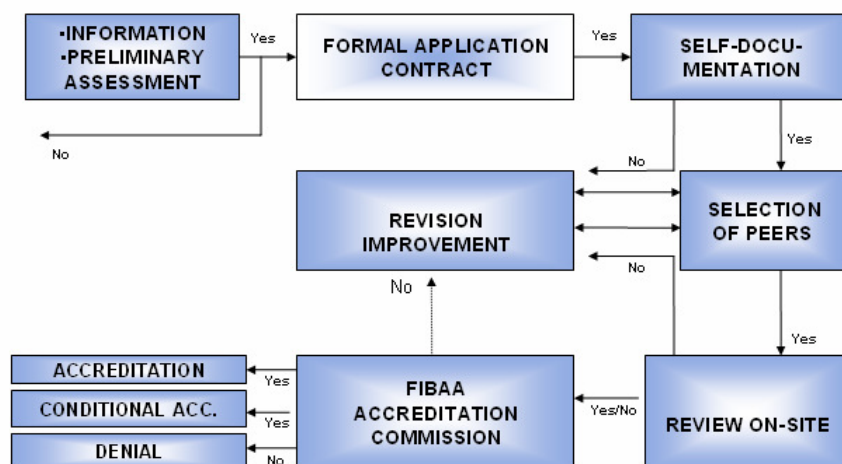
„Peer review“: Generally teams consist of at least four people, two of whom are from the academic sphere (university context or „Fachhochschule“, i.e. university for applied sciences), one from industry (representative of a company) and one student.

Basis for the peer assessment are „Questions Concerning Self-Documentation“, which have been structured systematically according to the following criteria: conceptional bases and objectives of the programme, positioning of the programme in science and the vocational field, faculty, contents of the programme and how they are taught, the student-development process from enrolment to graduation, and, finally, resources and management. All in all this amounts to about a hundred quality criteria. They are the basis of the higher education institutions self-documentation.

Teams of consultants draw up the final appraisal of the programme by working out a quality profile. For this process definitions of minimum requirements as well as a top benchmark are available for the individual quality criteria. Minimum requirement and benchmark are constantly scrutinised by science and industry. The consultants determine the individual quality criteria in their relevance according to the type of higher education institution and type of programme.

On the basis of the final report by the consultants the FIBAA accreditation commission decides about the accreditation, conditional accreditation, or denial.

## FIBAA - ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE



## PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

After the joint decision of the European Secretaries of Education in Bologna, the German-speaking countries realized the resolutions individually and in accordance with the national framework. Implementing the German Higher Education Framework Act (Hochschulrahmengesetz) resulted in a joint decision of the Kultusministerkonferenz (the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany) and Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Rectors Conference), which defines the execution of the accreditation procedure for the evaluation of the new range of courses.

Since 2001 accreditation of private universities has also been possible in Austria. Here the Austrian accreditation council approves of the programme on the basis of the Universitäts-Akkreditierungsgesetzes (UniAkkG). The decree of the Fachhochschulräte (Council of the Universities of Applied Science) encompassing the evaluation in the Austrian sector of universities of applied science is based on the Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz (i.e. the law governing studies at universities of applied science) version BGBl I 2003/100.

In Switzerland the guidelines for the accreditation of higher education institutions (16.10.2003) and the Fachhochschulgesetz (i.e. the law governing universities of applied science), version of 13.06.2006) provide the legislative basis for a system for accreditation and quality control.

A successful accreditation procedure furthers the development of a new range of courses on one hand and ensures the high quality continuum of internationally acknowledged programmes on the other. Next to this, accreditation processes bring forward a quicker and more flexible

approach when establishing new study programmes and simultaneously open possibilities for new contents and forms of the programmes.

## ACCREDITATIONS TO DATE

By December 2007, FIBAA had accredited a total of 550 courses:

### **by course type:**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Diplom degree                               | 3 courses   |
| Bachelor degree                             | 249 courses |
| Bachelor degree - distance learning courses | 10 courses  |
| Master degree                               | 154 courses |
| Master degree - distance learning courses   | 7 courses   |
| MBA degree                                  | 123 courses |
| MBA degree- distance learning courses       | 4 courses   |

### **by country:**

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Germany         | 471 courses |
| Austria         | 35 courses  |
| Switzerland     | 26 courses  |
| The Netherlands | 5 courses   |
| other countries | 3 courses   |

## FOCUS ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: SYSTEMS ACCREDITATION

Though the main business area of the FIBAA is the program accreditation of courses of study requiring compulsory attendance and correspondence courses, FIBAA has also been offering systems accreditation for universities, business schools or economics-oriented institutes since 2007. Systems accreditation views a higher education institution, a faculty, faculty school, department or other organizational unit as entity. Systems accreditation evaluates and appraises whether the higher education institutions and organisational units fulfil the standards defined as objectives. Through this process accomplishments in higher education will become more evident and recognisable – both nationally as well as internationally – and will provide orientation for students, employers, and society as a whole.

FIBAA-Systems Accreditation audits and assesses the systematic quality management in teaching and research. If this process results in a positive appraisal, one can take it for granted that not only the higher education institutions but also the “products” of the institution will have a high quality standard.

Besides this FIBAA-Systems Accreditation supports higher education institutions in the realisation of national guidelines like institutional evaluation in Austria or institutional accreditation in Switzerland.

FIBAA-Systems Accreditation offers clear added value: The evaluation of the individual quality criteria in a quality profile facilitates a detailed strengths- and weaknesses analysis. This analysis makes it easier to identify areas of potential development and the exact adjustment needed by the quality-management system to achieve this growth.

In excess of the guidelines set by the German Accreditation Council FIBAA-Systems Accreditation stresses the systematic character of the quality management and increases the potential to adapt to quality standards of the international higher education sector.

### **FIBAA - NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

The strong focus to economic sciences has been extended gradually to the fields of law and social sciences. In order to guarantee an integrated service spectrum across all the areas covered and to offer reasonably priced, well-arranged one-stop services, FIBAA co-operates with the following accrediting agencies, which compliments FIBAA's competences well:

An accreditation agency for study programmes in the areas of orthopaedagogy, care, health, and social care (AHPGS)

An accreditation agency for study programmes in the fields of engineering sciences, computer science, natural science, and maths (ASIIN).

### **INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ACCREDITATION**

Ever since its foundation FIBAA has highly valued and emphasised international co-operation in the field of accreditation and quality management. The active participation in international accreditation networks guarantees that FIBAA's work follows best international practices and current trends can be incorporated in FIBAA's policies. Acting in international networks and participating in international conferences further opens up the possibility to place experts for quality control in the international context. Surveys conducted amongst experts (higher education institution and consultants) show that FIBAA's activities are observed and followed with interest internationally.

### **ENQA and ECA**



The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was founded due to the recommendation of the EU-Council in 1998. Today it comprises 46 quality assurance agencies in 23 European countries. According to the Berlin Meeting of Ministers of Higher Education (Berliner Bildungsministertreffen) in 2003 the network shall receive a central status concerning the co-ordination of the European endeavours to achieve quality assurance standards.

Since 2002 FIBAA has been a member of ENQA and founding member of ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education). With this FIBAA belongs to those accreditation agencies which have been acknowledged across borders.

### **ARQAANEE (The Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network for Education)**

ARQAANEE is a non-profit independent organization that was established in Brussels this year, for the purpose of setting educational standards and providing quality assurance and accreditation services to governmental and private educational institutions in the Arab World. An exclusive collaboration agreement was signed in December 2007 between the Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network for Education (ARQAANEE) and the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA).

### **APQN (Asia-Pacific Quality Network)**

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) has been developed with the purpose of serving the needs of quality assurance agencies in higher education in a region that contains over half the world's population.

This is a fast-growing region, with an increasing appetite for education, and with increasing mobility of students and providers to meet that need. In turn, this makes it a region of growing and developing quality assurance agencies that needs to be able to deal with public and private providers, and with education and students that cross national borders. The APQN is already helping to build alliances between agencies, and assisting countries/territories that do not have a quality assurance agency of their own.

Many hands have contributed to the development of the Network, and through continued international collaboration we expect to see the APQN expand and flourish. We are fortunate in having World Bank support for capacity-building through these early years.

FIBAA has been recognized by APQN as "Observing Organisation" since february 2008.

### **CEENet (Central and Eastern European Networking Association)**

CEENet is an association of national organizations which focus on the academic, research and educational networking. CEENet membership comprises of 23 national research and education networks from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Slovakia, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

The primary mission of CEENet is to co-ordinate the international aspects of the academic, research and education networks in Central and Eastern Europe and in adjacent countries.

FIBAA is member of CEENet with "Observer Status" since May 2008.

### **INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education)**

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was established in 1991.

The main purpose of the Network is to collect and disseminate information on current and developing theory and practice in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education.

FIBAA currently applies for membership of INQAAHE Association.

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