

# Procedural Guidelines for the Establishment, Modification, Accreditation and Discontinuation of Degree Courses

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## 1 General Information

These procedural guidelines provide a binding foundation for all procedures related to the establishment, modification, accreditation and discontinuation of degree courses at the University of Rostock and determines the responsible organisational unit for each stage of the procedures.

The guidelines are based, in particular, on state legal requirements, as well as the accreditation requirements, and the Quality Assurance Regulations.

## 2 Players

Various players with individual tasks and responsibilities are involved in procedures for establishing, modifying, accrediting, and discontinuing degree courses at the University of Rostock. The Rectorate, represented by the Pro-Rector for Study, Education and Evaluation (hereinafter PSL), carries the responsibility for the procedures. Further players are required to participate in the procedures pursuant to the framework outlined below.

### 2.1 Responsible module teachers

Responsible module teachers are responsible for the content and organisation of the module they are offering. Any changes to module descriptions are made by the responsible module teachers and are subject to their judgement. If various teaching units are involved in one module, the responsible module teacher is responsible for closely coordinating these teaching units. If required, the responsible module teachers update the modules that they are responsible for and ensure that corresponding changes are made to the module catalogue. If a module description is to be added or requires changes in areas that require approval, the responsible module teacher announces the required changes to the member of staff responsible for the degree course.

### 2.2 Member of staff responsible for the degree course

Members of staff responsible for degree courses are responsible for the content and organisation of one or more degree courses at the University of Rostock. They check the requested changes and/or recommendations and conditions from quality assurance procedures with regard to their suitability to the qualification objectives and the existing offers provided by the degree course. If required, they then initiate a procedure for modifying the degree course by forwarding the requested changes to the management of the corresponding university organisational units. They act as the contact person for the PSL and the University and Quality Development Office (hereinafter HQE Office) for the respective degree course, represent the interests of the degree course in university bodies, ensure that requests and documents are submitted in due time, and keep the teachers and faculties affected informed.

In teacher-training degree courses, the Reform Committee for Teacher Education also adopts a coordinating function, in which it combines, discusses and forwards the details provided by the respective members of staff responsible for the degree courses at the individual departments/institutes.

### 2.3 Management of the university organisational unit

The management of the respective university organisational unit (e.g. faculties, Teacher Training and Educational Research Centre (ZLB) at the University of Rostock, Language Centre) is the formal party responsible for submitting the request in all procedures related to the degree courses/study offers of their organisational unit. Based on the requested changes, the organisational unit convenes with the member of staff responsible for the degree course/programme to discuss the type and scope of the desired modification procedures that it coordinates within the organisational unit(s). As part of the planning for the degree course, it submits a corresponding request to the HQE Office pursuant to 4.1. Requests can also be submitted at any time to the PSL and, provided there is sufficient capacity, will be included in the current cycle of changes or earmarked for the next one.

### 2.4 Faculty councils

The faculty councils receive the degree course documents from the member of staff responsible for the respective degree course. They are the highest decision-making entity at a faculty and ensure that all of the departments/institutes and chairs involved, as well as the representatives of the student body agree with the submitted documents. They also discuss the changes with representatives from the examination offices and examination administration to find out more about the technical and administrative effects of the planned changes, taking their verdict and the verdicts of the respective department student councils into account in their decision-making. The faculty councils decide on the degree course documents

and, if passed, oblige the institutes and teaching units involved to provide the agreed modules in the form and according to the regulations that had been submitted until the corresponding regulations expire. The faculty councils also decide upon the export of modules to degree courses from other faculties and commit to provide the exported modules in the form and according to the regulations that had been submitted until the corresponding regulations expire.

In organisational units at the university that provide teaching, but are not faculties, these tasks can be adopted by a body that replaces the faculty council, e.g. an advisory board.

## 2.5 University and Quality Development Office (HQE Office)

The University and Quality Development Office (HQE Office) supports the Rectorate in the process of strategic planning and management and is commissioned by the Rectorate to advise the members of staff responsible for the degree courses and modules in matters including the legal and university's own framework conditions, as well as modularisation and quality assurance. It also checks the standards and provisions have been observed. It manages the Senate Committee for Studies, Teaching, and Evaluation, as well as all ad hoc reform committees. It coordinates the processes related to the establishment, modification, accreditation, and discontinuation of degree courses, provides important figures and data obtained from surveys and controlling for quality assurance procedures and submits documents for discussing and/or passing decisions in the name of the university organisational units in the Senate Committee for Studies, Teaching and Evaluation, and in the Academic Senate.

## 2.6 Pro-Rector of Studying, Teaching and Evaluation (PSL)

The Pro-Rector of Studying, Teaching and Evaluation (PSL) is responsible for preparing and implementing the decisions passed by the Rectorate concerning procedures for establishing, modifying, accrediting, and discontinuing degree courses in accordance with the respective kind of procedure (Chapter 3).

## 2.7 Senate Committee for Studies, Teaching and Evaluation (SK SLE)

The Senate Committee for Studies, Teaching and Evaluation (SK SLE) is a sub-committee of the Academic Senate and the central body for discussing procedures related to the establishment, modification, accreditation, and discontinuation of degree courses. In procedures with a reform committee, it appoints the members of the corresponding reform committee. In these procedures, the SK SLE's task is to observe and implement the internal and external provisions for modularisation and designing degree courses, and to ensure the university-wide objectives are taken into consideration. If there are disputes in approval processes that cannot be solved between the university organisational units or reform committee, the SK SLE acts as a mediator and issues recommendations on how to proceed. The SK SLE proposes resolutions to the Academic Senate.

## 2.8 Reform committees

Reform committees are advisory bodies in academic self-governance. They collaborate closely with the Rectorate, the faculties, the SK SLE, the Academic Senate, and the HQE Office. Reform committees must be involved if new degree courses are to be established or substantial modifications are planned for existing courses. In principle, a distinction is made between permanent reform committees and ad hoc reform committees. The members of reform committees are always elected and appointed by the SK SLE. Reform committees can issue their own standing orders. If not determined differently in the standing orders, reform committees have a total of at least five and at most ten members with voting rights, at least one of these must be a student member. The committees have a quorum if at least half of their members with voting rights are present at the meeting. The meetings of the reform committees are not open to the public, but the reform committee may invite guests and/or external experts to the meetings. Like the general management, they have no voting rights.

### 2.8.1 Permanent reform committees for teacher education

The following members with voting rights belong to the Permanent Reform Committee for Teacher Education:

1. A member of the university community from the field of teacher education who has been appointed by the ZLB;
2. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities;
3. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences;
4. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Theology;
5. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences;
6. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Marine Engineering;
7. The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering;
8. The member of ZLB UR's Board of Directors who is responsible for the area of educational sciences;

9. The ASTA Representative for Teacher Education;
10. The Chairperson of the Student-Teacher Conference (SLK)

The Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Law attends the meetings as a permanent guest. The Reform Committee can invite further guests. The Committee is chaired by the member appointed by the ZLB. The ZLB is responsible for the general management. The members of the Committee can appoint a deputy.

The member named under number 1 is appointed by ZLB for a duration of four years; re-appointment is permitted. The further members belong to the Permanent Reform Committee for Teacher Education for the duration of their term of office.

### 2.8.2 Ad-hoc reform committees

The members of ad-hoc reform committees are nominated by the organisational unit that is responsible for the respective degree course, the student member is nominated by the respective department student body; and they are all elected and appointed for the duration of their work tasks by the SK SLE. The PSL and the SK SLE may make own suggestions for members of the reform committee. Proceedings are generally managed by the HQE Office.

## 2.9 Academic Senate

In accordance with § 81 LHG (State Higher Education Act), the Academic Senate is the central decision-making body for statutes linked to procedures for establishing and modifying degree courses.

## 2.10 Rectorate and Rector

The Rectorate decides on the establishment and discontinuation of degree courses, and on the internal accreditation of degree courses.

The Rector approves the General Examination Regulations and the degree course-specific examination and study regulations (SPSO) pursuant to § 38 LHG.

## 3 Kinds of Procedures

Distinctions are made between the various kinds of procedures at the University of Rostock. The Pro-Rector for Study, Education and Evaluation is responsible for the process. The respective lead organisational unit is responsible for the details and the documents associated with the procedure. That is usually

- the HQE Office for procedures concerning the passing and modification of general examination regulations,
- the respective organisational unit at the university for study offers, including modules.

### 3.1 Establishing degree courses

The procedure for establishing degree courses should be used if a new study offer is to be introduced as a degree course. Significant modifications to degree courses that preclude students from changing from an old to a new SPSO are treated as new degree courses (see also 3.4). The introduction of new degree courses is always linked to the appointment of a reform committee and an internal accreditation procedure.

Usually, the procedure for establishing degree courses should be started at least one year prior to the first planned enrolments. The procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)
4. Review by reform committee
5. Information on standards and specifications and their review
6. Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)
7. Resolution in the Academic Senate
8. Approval by the Rectorate
9. Examination by the competent ministry
10. Publication
11. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

## **3.2 Modifying the general examination regulations, degree courses and modules**

The procedure for modifying degree courses is used when changes are to be made to current degree courses. Depending on the scope of the planned changes, the modifications are categorised in one of the following procedures.

### **3.2.1 Passing and modification of general examination regulations (RPO)**

In accordance with § 38(1) LHG, examination and study regulations are passed on the basis of general examination regulations. The passing of or modifications to general examination regulations therefore affect all of the degree courses covered by the scope of the regulations (currently bachelor's and master's, or teacher-training degree courses).

The PSL is responsible for corresponding procedures and is supported by the HQE Office in the performance of the related tasks. The following procedural steps apply for the passing or modification of general examination regulations:

1. Strategic planning
2. Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)
3. Information on standards and specifications and their review
4. Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)
5. Resolution in the Academic Senate
6. Approval by the Rectorate
7. Examination by the competent ministry
8. Publication
9. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

### **3.2.2 Procedures without reform committee**

The procedure without a reform committee constitutes the standard procedure for modifying a degree course. It should be started at least six months prior to the planned entry into force of the change and consists of the following procedural steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)
4. Information on standards and specifications and their review
5. Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)
6. Resolution in the Academic Senate
7. Approval by the Rectorate
8. Examination by the competent ministry (if notification is required for this degree course)
9. Publication
10. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

### **3.2.3 Procedures with reform committee**

A procedure with reform committees is held if substantial modifications are made to a degree course. Furthermore, changes to teacher-training degree courses usually involve a reform committee.

The procedure should be started at least nine months prior to the planned entry into force of the change and consists of the following procedural steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)
4. Review by reform committee
5. Information on standards and specifications and their review
6. Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)
7. Resolution in the Academic Senate
8. Approval by the Rectorate
9. Examination by the competent ministry (if notification is required for this degree course)
10. Publication
11. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry



### 3.2.4 Simplified procedure

The simplified procedure is used if the planned changes only have a limited scope or minor effect on other study offers. This is the case if only some paragraphs of an SPSO are to be adjusted or the contents of modules changed pursuant to 3.2.5 and there is no deviation from the draft SPSO and the valid standards.

The procedure should be started at least three months prior to the planned entry into force of the change and consists of the following procedural steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)
4. Information on standards and specifications and their review
5. Resolution in the Academic Senate
6. Approval by the Rectorate
7. Examination by the competent ministry (if notification is required for this degree course)
8. Publication
9. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

### 3.2.5 Creation and adjustment of module descriptions

A module description that corresponds to the sample module description for the University of Rostock must be created and published for every module on offer. Furthermore, a list of modules that complies with the degree course-specific examination and study regulations must be published for every degree course in a form typically used by the university.

In accordance with § 38 LHG, the following details must be provided in the examination and study regulations:

- Module description
- Credit points and associated overall workload
- Duration of the module
- Frequency of offer
- Teaching time in SWS (contact hours per week) differentiated according to the type of class
- Amount, type, and scope of preliminary assessed work for examinations
- Amount, type, and scope of examinations and/or marked coursework
- Grading and assessment
- Regular examination date

If a module is to be changed in one of these points, amending statutes must be created successively for all of the degree courses that have published this module in the SPSO.

In all other respects, modules can be updated regularly in the following points:

- Contact(s)
- Workload
- Recommended participation requirements
- Person responsible for the module
- Reading list
- Teaching contents
- Forms of teaching and learning
- Additional information

Changes to the details of the following points require the consent of all organisational units that provide the corresponding module:

- Language of tuition
- Admission restrictions
- Mandatory participation requirements
- Association to the curricula
- Learning and qualification objectives

The further procedure for creating, modifying and discontinuing modules is regulated in separate guidelines.

## 3.3 Discontinuing degree courses

If a degree course is to be closed, it must be discontinued formally. Once effective, no further students can enrol for the first subject semester of the respective degree course. It can still be possible for students to change to the degree course

at any stage that corresponds to the last study cohort. The degree course is discontinued permanently after a transition period. The procedure consists of the following procedural steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. Decision to discontinue degree courses
4. Publication
5. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

### 3.4 Internal accreditation

All **procedures to introduce new or make significant modifications to existing** degree courses must be accompanied by an internal accreditation procedure that takes place as an assessment of the concept. In accordance with § 28 *Landesverordnung zur Regelung der Studienakkreditierung des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - StudakkLVO MV* (State Ordinance on the Regulation of Study Accreditation of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), changes to the following aspects can be considered major modifications, but the list is not exhaustive:

- Name of the degree course,
- Standard length of study for the degree course,
- Degree conferred on completion of the degree course,
- Degree course concept,
- Qualification objectives of the degree course,
- Profile of the degree course,
- Contents of the degree course,
- Introduction of areas of specialisation that lead to substantial differences in the competencies of graduates,
- If an identical curriculum is provided in various teaching formats, at various places of learning or by various partners.

**Internal accreditation procedures** must also be held **as part of regular quality assurance measures** when the accreditation period comes to an end, even if there are no plans to modify the degree course. Internal accreditation procedures are always preceded by a degree course evaluation pursuant to the Quality Assurance Strategy of the University of Rostock. The procedures may be realised in clusters of several degree courses.

If accreditation has been granted without conditions, it is valid for eight years. If conditions have been imposed, accreditation shall be considered provisional until the conditions have been met; however, this shall be no longer than twelve months. If accreditation is denied, the procedure is deemed to have failed and the Rectorate shall set conditions for the recommencement of the procedure. Once these conditions have been met, the internal accreditation procedure can be resumed. If the conditions are not met within twelve months, an external agency may be commissioned with the accreditation if agreed to by the Rectorate and the respective organisational unit. The costs related to such a procedure must be borne by the university's organisational unit that is responsible for the degree course. As a general rule of principal, this applies to all degree courses, even those that are completed with a state or church examination. The Rectorate decides on justified exceptions.

The internal accreditation procedure should be commenced at least one year prior to the expiration of the accreditation or the planned establishment or modification of a degree course. The procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Application
2. Strategic planning
3. External evaluation of the degree course
4. Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)
5. Resolution in the Academic Senate
6. Approval by the Rectorate
7. Fulfilment of accreditation conditions (if conditions have been imposed)
8. Publication
9. Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

## 4 Procedural Steps

The following procedural steps form the building blocks for all procedures for establishing, modifying, accrediting, and discontinuing degree courses at the University of Rostock. They are consecutive, although some of the procedural steps can be realised at the same time or overlap in terms of timing. Usually, no procedural step can be completed before the preceding procedural steps have been completed.



The HQE Office documents the necessary procedural and assessment steps.

## 4.1 Application

All procedures for modifying, establishing, discontinuing, and accrediting degree courses must be requested by the heads of the university's organisational units. Corresponding requests must be submitted to the HQE Office by 15 July of each year for study offers that are to be established, modified, discontinued or internally accredited by the end of the following academic year. A submission deadline that has been agreed to by the PSL and the HQE Office and deviates from the date named above will be communicated in good time to the university's organisational units. The PSL will request corresponding details regarding the planning of degree courses from the organisational units in advance.

**Requests for establishing a degree course** usually include:

- Request form completed in full
- Draft concept for the degree course
- Suggestions for members of the reform committee
- Suggestions for the members of and possible involvement of the group of external experts

**Requests for modifying** a degree course usually include:

- Request form completed in full
- Depiction of planned changes
- Suggestions for members of the reform committee (for procedures with a reform committee)
- Suggestions for the members of and possible involvement of the group of external experts

**Requests for discontinuing** a degree course usually include:

- Request form completed in full

**Requests for internal accreditation** of a degree course (without plans to modify the course) usually include:

- Request form completed in full
- Suggestions for the members of and possible involvement of the group of external experts

The requests must be submitted with all of the required documents that are completed in full. In justified cases of exception, it is possible for certain documents to be submitted at a later date.

Furthermore, approvals from all of the organisational units involved (faculty council resolutions or declarations of consent from the heads of the organisational units) must be submitted together with the request.

Corresponding request forms are provided by the HQE Office. The HQE Office checks whether all of the required documents have been completed in full and requests any required missing documents.

## 4.2 Strategic planning

With the help of the HQE Office, the PSL reviews and checks all of the requests and uses them to prepare the planning for the degree course, including the accreditation procedures, together with the HQE Office. The planning of the degree course entails a provisional classification of the procedure that takes into account the criteria for the individual procedures named under 3 as well as a temporal prioritisation. If there is sufficient justification (upcoming expiry of deadlines, cluster procedures), degree courses that had not requested a certain procedure can also be classified in one of the procedures. The Rectorate passes a decision on which degree courses are to be established, modified, accredited, and discontinued in the following academic year. Based on the documents on the concept for the degree course, including the capacity calculations, the Rectorate passes comment on the planned new establishments, and, if necessary, imposes conditions. The Rectorate's decision regarding the planning of degree courses is announced to the university bodies by the PSL. If necessary, organisational units will then be demanded to submit missing requests or further documents.

If circumstances occur during the course of a procedure to modify a degree course that contradict the previous classification of a procedure, the PSL may make a new procedural classification.

Every year, following consultation with the PSL, the HQE Office presents a timeframe to the Rectorate with details of all degree courses that require **internal accreditation procedures**. The Rectorate decides on the pending evaluations and informs the SK SLE of the decisions. The procedures can be completed in clusters consisting of several degree courses or given to external agencies (e.g. for joint-degree programmes).

### 4.3 Decisions to discontinue degree courses

The Rectorate passes decisions on the **discontinuation** of degree courses. In the strategic planning phase of such decisions, the Rectorate considers a number of various criteria, for example:

- General conditions in university and education policies, such as target agreements and the University Development Plan,
- Demand,
- Evaluation results,
- Available resources (staff-related and material),
- Date of the final expiry of the degree course,
- Effects on other degree courses (e.g. modules from and for other degree courses)
- Effects on the students (in particular the guarantee that enrolled students will be able to complete their studies properly),
- Necessary transitional regulations (possibilities to change to other degree courses, recognition regulations).

The various players are involved in the decision-making process before the Rectorate decides on the discontinuation of a degree course. In addition to informal discussion rounds with the subject representatives affected by the potential discontinuation, formal hearings are held:

- with the affected faculty councils, and
- the Academic Senate.

### 4.4 Discussion of the documents and recommendation in the SK SLE

In these procedures, the SK SLE's task is to observe and implement the internal and external provisions for modularisation and designing degree courses, and to ensure the university-wide objectives are taken into consideration.

The procedure in the SK SLE has two stages. It consists of two readings, with the first focussing on the details of the establishment and modification, as well as, if applicable, the appointment of a reform committee. The second reading serves to discuss the specific documents related to the degree course or the request for accreditation.

#### 4.4.1 Presentation in the SK SLE (first reading)

Procedures for establishing and modifying degree courses are subject to a first reading in the SK SLE. This requires the corresponding request including the draft of the concept for the degree course or the self-description and a draft examination and study plan, as well as any possible planned changes to be submitted in writing and to be presented at the meeting by the member of staff responsible for the degree course or a member of staff responsible at the lead organisational unit. For **procedures with a reform committee**, the planned members of the reform committee and the draft of the required tasks will also be presented, as well as the planned members and involvement of the group of external experts, if an internal accreditation procedure is being requested at the same time. The members of the Senate's committee shall base their discussions on the submitted documents.

If the Senate's committee approves the submitted concept, the establishment or modification of the degree course will enter the next phase of the approval procedure. The SK SLE elects the members of the reform committee if no permanent reform committee has been tasked with the project. It can make its own suggestions that deviate from those that have been put forward previously. If necessary, it can also expand the required scope of tasks. The members of the reform committee are appointed for the duration of the required tasks.

For all of the procedures, apart from simplified procedures, one of the members of the Senate's committee will be selected as rapporteur to check the degree course documents for the Senate's committee in the further procedure and present them to the SK SLE in the second reading.

#### 4.4.2 Discussion in the SK SLE (second reading)

The degree course documents that have been completed in full by the competent organisational unit are submitted for a second reading that is separate from the first. Furthermore, the declarations of consent from all of the organisational units involved (e.g. ITMZ, department student bodies, faculty councils or heads of organisational units) and the results of the final review from the Legal Services Office and the HQE Office are at hand. The HQE Office report comments on formal aspects regarding the design of degree courses and modularisation. It also includes the results of the Legal Services Office's review. At least one representative from the responsible organisational unit attends the reading and answers questions.

Both the HQE Office and the rapporteur present an audit report created from template for **all procedures with or without a reform committee**. The report comments on the planned content of the degree course and on the realisation of university-wide and faculty objectives, as well as on the observation of standards from the perspective of a representative from a different area of expertise. Furthermore, if available, opinions from external experts from previous evaluation procedures shall be included in the discussion.

The Senate's committee shall base its discussions of the submitted documents on these reports.

The Senate's committee will then finally decide whether to forward the documents to the Academic Senate, possibly subject to conditions. If it decides to forward the documents, the Senate's committee will also issue a recommendation for the Academic Senate.

In **procedures with reform committee**, not only the the degree course documents and the rapporteur's report, but also the statement from the reform committee or the organisational unit(s) will be submitted. The Senate's committee shall base its discussions of the submitted documents on these reports. The Senate's committee will then finally decide whether to forward the documents to the Academic Senate, possibly subject to conditions. If it decides to forward the documents, the Senate's committee will also issue a recommendation on the draft regulations to the Academic Senate.

In **internal accreditation procedures**, the complete set of documents related to the procedure shall be submitted. These consist of at least the self-evaluation from the organisational unit(s), the final assessment from the group of external experts, and the organisational unit(s) statement on the assessment. The members of the Senate's committee discuss the documents and statements and use them to issue a recommendation for the Academic Senate. The recommendation may provide for a provisional accreditation subject to conditions.

If the Senate's committee decides not to forward the documents to the Academic Senate, further readings are possible. In such cases, the Senate's committee issues conditions which must be realised by the competent organisational unit before the next reading. All further readings are treated like a second reading.

## 4.5 External evaluation of the degree course

All internal accreditation procedures are linked to an external evaluation of the degree course pursuant to the provisions of the University of Rostock's Quality Assurance Regulations and Quality Assurance Strategy. The HQE Office supports the responsible members of staff at the faculty with the procedure and takes responsibility for the steps linked to the organisational realisation of the evaluation process. If an external evaluation of parts of the degree courses has taken place in the last two years, the corresponding results may be taken into account.

The external evaluation of the degree course also includes the assessment by external experts. The group of experts should be composed of one to two subject peers per discipline, a student from another university, and a representative from the professional world. The experts should be selected pursuant to the DFG's guidelines for reviews. When selecting the peers and the representative from the professional world, the member of staff responsible for the degree course or the faculty make at least two prioritised suggestions per member of the group of experts. The HQE Office usually requests the external student representative from the students in the accreditation pool. The HQE Office is commissioned with the formal appointment of the experts and organises the further contact, including obtaining the final assessment. In order to take into account the additional internationality in degree courses with foreign cooperation partners, extended measures are taken in degree course evaluation procedures, e.g. a group of external experts that corresponds to the special requirements.

The member of staff responsible for the degree course writes the concept for the degree course or the self-description of the degree course based on the Guidelines for Writing a Self-Description for the Evaluation of Degree Courses at the University of Rostock, which may be summarised in an overall report as part of a cluster evaluation at the faculty. The HQE Office checks whether the concept for the degree course/self-description has been drawn up in full and, if necessary, demands further documents, or supplements the appendices with central documentation from the university governance. The self-description must be agreed with the faculty that is responsible for the degree course and must then be given to the HQE Office for review. The HQE Office also makes sure that the external experts receive the concept for the degree course/the self-description including all of the appendices.

**Procedures for establishing and making significant modifications to degree courses** always entail an assessment of the concept for the degree course by an assessment committee composed of external experts. The external experts should issue recommendations during the development of the concept and review the final concept. The assessment usually occurs on paper; on-site visits by the experts are only appropriate in specially justified cases. The named external experts can also contribute their recommendations directly to the work of the reform committees, e.g. by speaking as guests at the meetings. The expert committee evaluates the concept for the degree course and the degree course documents (SPSO) and creates a – where possible joint – assessment based on the provided guidelines and taking into account the valid norms and standards.

Usually, the procedure for establishing degree courses and making significant modifications should be started at least one year prior to the first planned enrolment.

**Procedures for the regular assessment of the quality** of degree courses or (internal) accreditation or reaccreditation are always linked to a review of the degree course concept, including an on-site visit from the committee of external experts. Usually, the review of the concept for the degree course is based on the self-description of the respective degree course from the relevant subject area and is consolidated by the on-site visit of the experts. The expert committee evaluates the concept for the degree course and produces a – where possible joint – assessment based on the provided guidelines and taking into account the valid norms and standards.

## 4.6 Review by reform committee

### 4.6.1 Tasks of the reform committee

For procedures for establishing or modifying degree courses in procedures with a reform committee, the PSL works together with the HQE Office and based on the request from the responsible organisational unit to create a list of tasks expected of the reform committee. If a permanent reform committee is to be commissioned with the procedure, a list of tasks must only be created if the planned procedure exceeds the previous work tasks of the permanent reform committee. In **procedures to establish** a degree course, the reform committee will be commissioned to discuss and finalise the draft concept for the degree course. Taking into consideration the recommendations of the external assessment, it creates the degree course documents, which it coordinates with the respective organisational units and then forwards them to the next steps of the university approval procedure.

In **procedures to modify** a degree course, the reform committee is tasked with summarising the planned changes and describing their effects on the degree course. Taking into consideration the recommendations of the external assessment, it creates the degree course documents, which it coordinates with the respective organisational units and then forwards them to the next steps of the university approval procedure.

### 4.6.2 Appointing a reform committee

If no permanent reform committee has been commissioned with the **establishment or modification of a degree course** and the procedure requires a reform committee, an ad-hoc reform committee will be established pursuant to 4.4.1.

### 4.6.3 Preparation, discussion and review

The members of the reform committee review the concept for the degree course or the planned changes, as well as the further submitted documents pursuant to the tasks with which they have been commissioned. To this end, they also use capacity and resource estimations provided by the HQE Office. The recommendations from the review of the concept or the degree course evaluation are used in combination with the statements from the organisational unit(s) involved, the results from the own review, and relevant results from evaluations, surveys and other quality assurance measures to create the degree course documents, in particular the SPSO and the module descriptions.

The HQE Office accompanies and supports the work of the reform committee.

After the concept or the planned changes have been drawn up in a corresponding draft ordinance, the relevant documents are handed over to all of the organisational units involved. The faculty councils or the heads of the organisational units involved decide on the received draft ordinance. If all of the organisational units involved agree to the draft of the SPSO, the documents are submitted to the SK SLE for a second reading.

## 4.7 Information on standards and specifications and their review

During the entire process, the HQE Office takes on various tasks to support the procedure. This includes both informing the organisational unit(s) involved in the establishment, modification, accreditation, or discontinuation of a degree course about the internal and external provisions regarding the modularisation and design of degree courses. It also involves providing information to the SK SLE. It checks whether the documents submitted by the respective organisational unit(s) have been completed in full and submits them to the SK SLE.

In **procedures for establishing and modifying** degree courses, it ensures that the degree course documents have been subject to legal review prior to the second reading in the SK SLE. This, together with the estimation of capacities, is included in the review of the documents performed by the HQE Office itself. The HQE Office creates its own report on whether the internal and external prerequisites for the modularisation, design of the degree course and accreditation have been observed. It submits this report together with the degree course documents for the second reading in the SK SLE.



## 4.8 Resolution in the Academic Senate

The draft resolutions for the Academic Senate, including all of the required documents are to be submitted to the HQE Office by the responsible organisational unit. Once it has verified the documents have been submitted in full and recommendations/conditions from the SK SLE have been realised, the HQE Office passes them on to the management of the Academic Senate. The management of the Academic Senate provides corresponding templates.

The Academic Senate decides on the submitted draft ordinance after hearing the recommendations from the SK SLE.

In **procedures for establishing** a degree course, the Academic Senate is also consulted on the establishment of the degree course. Furthermore, following consultation of the recommendation from the SK SLE, it recommends a decision on the accreditation to the Rectorate. The recommended decision for the internal accreditation procedure can provide for a provisional accreditation subject to conditions.

In **internal accreditation procedures**, the complete documentation of the procedure is submitted. This comprises at least the self-evaluation from the organisational unit(s), the final assessment from the group of external experts, the organisational unit's verdict on the assessment, as well as the SK SLE's verdict on the procedure. Furthermore, following consultation of the recommendation from the SK SLE, it recommends a decision on the accreditation to the Rectorate. The recommended decision for the internal accreditation procedure can provide for a provisional accreditation subject to conditions.

## 4.9 Approval by the Rectorate

If the Academic Senate has passed the draft ordinance, in **procedures for the establishment and modification** of a degree course, it is presented to the Rector for approval by the HQE Office.

In **procedures for establishing** a degree course, the Rectorate also decides on the establishment of the degree course.

In **internal accreditation procedures**, the HQE Office submits the full documentation of the ongoing internal accreditation procedure. This comprises at least the self-evaluation from the organisational unit(s), the final assessment from the external experts, and the verdict from the organisational unit(s) on the individual assessments. The members of the Rectorate pass their decision on the internal accreditation of the degree course based on the submitted documents, taking into account the recommendations from the SK SLE and the Academic Senate. If one of the bodies' decisions deviates from the vote of the external experts, the deviation must be justified and documented in an intelligible manner that is in line with the provisions of the Accreditation Council. If accreditation has been granted without conditions, it is valid for eight years. If provisional accreditation has been granted subject to conditions, these conditions must be specified in detail. The organisational unit that is responsible for the degree course is given a deadline for fulfilling these conditions. The deadline must be no longer than twelve months. During this period, the degree course is considered provisionally accredited. Furthermore, the Rectorate appoints a body, an organisational unit, a person, or group of persons to check that the conditions have been met. If the conditions are not met on time, or if accreditation is denied, the procedure is considered to have failed and the Rectorate defines new conditions for a recommencement of the procedure. Once these conditions have been met, the internal accreditation procedure can be resumed. If the conditions are not met within twelve months, an external agency may be commissioned with the accreditation if agreed to by the Rectorate and the respective organisational unit. The costs related to such a procedure must be borne by the university's organisational unit that is responsible for the degree course.

## 4.10 Examination by the competent ministry

In accordance with § 13(2 & 3) LHG M-V, the enactment and amendment of general examination regulations must be approved by the competent ministry. The introduction of new degree courses and the modification of degree courses that are completed with a state examination, and degree courses that do not fall under or deviate from the general examination regulations, as well as the enactment and the amendment of the general examination regulations must be announced to the competent ministry. To this end, once approved by the Rector, the HQE Office submits the documents to the competent ministry for examination. This review takes place within three months. If the competent ministry makes recommendations or issues conditions, they are reported to the Academic Senate and realised by the responsible organisational unit in consultation with all of the organisational units involved in the procedure. If required, a new version of the ordinance is passed by the Academic Senate and presented to the Rector for approval and, if necessary, announced again to the competent ministry.

## 4.11 Publication

If the Rector has granted approval and, if involved, the competent ministry has agreed, the **establishment, modification or discontinuation** of the degree course will be published by the Academic Affairs Division in the University of Rostock's Official Bulletin.

In **internal accreditation procedures**, the HQE Office informs the Accreditation Council of the results and publishes them in a suitable manner at the University of Rostock.

#### 4.12 Announcement of publication to the competent ministry

Once the establishment, modification, or discontinuation of the degree course has been published in the University of Rostock's Official Bulletin, or after the accreditation has been approved by the Rector, it is announced to the competent ministry.

#### 4.13 Fulfilment of accreditation conditions

If provisional accreditation was granted by the Rectorate in **internal accreditation procedures**, the responsibility for the fulfilment of the conditions lies with the organisational unit that is responsible for the degree course. The management of the organisational unit is responsible for the realisation and fulfilment of the conditions; it can delegate this task to the member of staff responsible for the degree course. The organisational unit documents the fulfilment of the conditions in a suitable way and submits them on time to the body that has been appointed for the review by the Rectorate. The PSL decides whether an external assessment is required for checking the conditions have been met. The Rectorate decides whether the conditions have been met based on the documentation concerning the fulfilment of the conditions and on the report of the review, as well as, if applicable, the external assessment. If it decides that the conditions have been met, the degree course receives accreditation for eight years, which also includes the provisional period. If the conditions have not been met or the set period for their fulfilment has expired, the internal accreditation period is considered failed, the provisional accreditation expires, and the internal accreditation procedure has to be recommenced from the beginning.



## Appendix: Overview of Procedures

