



EAHEA ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK



www.eahea.org



EAHEA[®]
European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation



ABOUT ACCREDITATION



Accreditation is a review of the quality of universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, colleges, schools, distance learning centers, lifelong learning centers, online courses, corporations, agencies, professionals, and instructors.

All over the world, accreditation is a major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides quality education.

Accreditation may be either institutional or programmatic and is a voluntary, comprehensive, and objective process of outside peer review to determine whether an institution or program meets the standards of the accrediting body in institutional and/or educational quality and effectiveness. The EAHEA provides institutional accreditation for its members.



Whether a college, school, university, distance learning center, or program is accredited is important:

- 🏛️ Students who want governmental (and sometimes association, organization) grants and loans need to attend a university, school, college, distance learning center, online course, or program that is accredited.
- 🏛️ Employers ask if a university, school, college, distance learning center, online course, or program is accredited before deciding to provide tuition assistance to current employees, evaluating the credentials of new employees, or making a charitable contribution.
- 🏛️ The government requires that a university, school, college, distance learning center, online course, or program be accredited to be eligible for grants and loans or other funds.
- 🏛️ Governments require that a university, school, college, distance learning center, online course, or program be accredited when they make state funds available to students or institutions and when they allow students to sit for government licensure examinations in some professional fields.

Accreditation is a complicated subject. "Informing the Public About Accreditation" is an effort to reduce this complexity and provide the public with answers to these basic questions: What is Accredited? Why is Accreditation Important?



What is Accredited?

Universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, colleges, schools, distance learning centers, lifelong learning centers, online courses, corporations, agencies, professionals, and instructors are accredited.

Around the world, schools, colleges, universities, and distance learning centers are accredited by one of the hundreds of international accrediting organizations. Programs are accredited by one of approximately some programmatic accrediting organizations.

The Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by EAHEA contains information about thousands of institutions and programs around the world links to the websites of these institutions are also available.

When using the database; To learn about a specific school, college, university, or distance learning center, go to the Accredited Members Directory page and type in the name of the institution. To learn about an institution in a specific country, type in the name of the country.

Why is Accreditation Important?



Accreditation is important because it gives the assurance to the public, in particular to prospective students, that you, as an education provider, meet education quality standards in the global market.

Prospective students usually feel insecure accessing the international market when they need to measure the quality of a foreign education provider with the standards known to them (set forth by their own country). European Agency for Higher Education and Accreditation accreditation may provide a global education quality reference not limited or constrained by local regulations or idiosyncrasies.

The comprehensive compilation of institutions provided by the European ENIC-NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centers) and the UNESCO IAU (International Association of Universities) is usually limited to traditional universities recognized by their corresponding Ministry of Education.

What happens then with many higher education initiatives and institutions that do not fit in this category? What happens with those who provide innovative pedagogical approaches, programs of study not yet recognized by the traditional education establishment, or simply those who are responding to the current global market demands? EAHEA accreditation becomes the best way to endorse them.

It is essential to recognize that in a global market, accreditation does take on many forms. The perception of government accreditation as the "gold standard" dismisses the growing and major impact that many international schools are having on the future of global higher education. The question is not who or what accredits the school, rather, it is - How much accreditation does the school need to have? What institutions of higher learning should be considering is not adding more local accreditations in their home nation, but a truly international accreditation standard that may serve in the global market arena.



Accreditation Types

Full Accreditation

This institutive accreditation type is for universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, colleges, schools, corporations, etc. that use traditional education methods.

Full Accreditation accredits only the institution (administrative, organizational, financial, educational system, student/alumni services, etc.) and does not contain degrees and programs.

Online Accreditation

This institutive accreditation type is for open universities, distance learning centers, lifelong learning centers, online courses, etc. that use online education methods.

Online Accreditation accredits only the institution (administrative, organizational, financial, educational system, student/alumni services, etc.) and does not contain degrees and programs.





Program Accreditation

This accreditation type is only for accredited universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, online courses, etc., and includes a specific program/course (MA, MS, MBA, LLM, DBA, etc.) that has a curriculum.

Important Notice

Full/Online Accreditation does not contain institution's programs that have the curriculum.

If you want to get an accreditation for your programs, you must apply to Program Accreditation for each program after applying for Full/Online Accreditation.



Accreditation Application Steps

European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation has worked throughout the years to establish itself as one of the most credible accreditation agency in the world. With EAHEA, hundreds of institutes have received accreditation based on the quality of education they are providing without any biases regarding location or financial standings. The Points Profile System along with the representatives present worldwide ensures credibility.

The three-step process is as follows:

Step 1: Institutes submit their applications via www.eahea.org and get a free consultation from one of our secretariat representatives. Once the application is reviewed by the Secretary, they move to the next step.

Step 2: The second step of the process is to visit (or video call) institutions and inspect their facilities, faculty, education standard, etc.

Step 3: Once the visit inspection report is submitted, our commission members review it and, if qualified, the institute gets EAHEA's accreditation (full accreditation, online accreditation, or program accreditation).



About the EAHEA Accreditation Status



EAHEA Accreditation isn't a Substitute of Legal

Regulations: Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental peer review process. Accreditation by the EAHEA shall be understood to convey only that the higher education institution meets the EAHEA's educational standards.

Such recognition is not in any way intended to substitute legal authorization, recognition or regulation, through compliance with local government laws. Legal authorization, recognition or regulation, and government accreditation occur in the context of different reviews.

Institutional Accreditation: The EAHEA accredited institution is evaluated as a whole entity or in every specific program offered.

Thus, the EAHEA accreditation status is programmatic and it may be useful for the approval of specific programs (not for licensing of professions).



Any educational institution that intends to earn the accreditation status from the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation must demonstrate compliance, through the application for accreditation (Self Assessment Report), with the education quality standards set forth by the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS



1. Application for Accreditation: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation has prepared an application for accreditation that will guide the applicant institutions in the preparation of the Self Study Report and the required documentary evidence. The applicant may apply online for accreditation and answer the required questions.

This application is a legally binding contract between the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation and the applicant institution that states the rights and obligations of both parties.

The applicant institution may submit the application for verification of its accreditation eligibility with pay the Secretary fee. Once the EAHEA Secretary confirms the eligible options, the applicant institution is entitled to pay the Accreditation fee.

The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation will not start any accreditation process without the corresponding application and paying the Secretary fee.

2. Consideration of Eligibility: Accreditation focuses on higher education institutes and vocational institutions. An eligible member must be any kind of organization, entity, or company properly authorized to conduct educational teaching and certification, to award postsecondary degrees, certificates, or other educational or professional credentials.

The entities eligible for accreditation must prepare individuals to achieve competencies and attain the educational qualifications necessary to begin functioning in a specific occupation. In other words, they must prepare individuals in a branch of knowledge, science, art, or business that has application in a specific occupation, usually requiring significant specialized training or profession.



The Secretary will review the online application form and want to see some required documents. The applicant may download and print the required documents, then fill them out and finally send them out to the EAHEA Secretary by email (doc, pdf, or jpg formats are accepted).

3. Accreditation Fees: The institution of education applying for accreditation to the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation must pay the accreditation fee once the eligibility has been confirmed by the EAHEA Secretary, and before any actual evaluation of the accreditation process starts. (For details, look at the bottom of the page).

4. Evaluation Process: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation Secretary will review and grade the application for accreditation and attached documents for the assessment of how each standard is addressed by the applicant educational institution. Each standard is graded on a 0 to 4 scale.

The evaluation of each standard is graded according to the following scale:

- 4 - Outstanding:** No need for improvement.
- 3 - Standard:** May improve.
- 2 - Acceptable:** Requires improvement.
- 1 - Insufficient:** Not meeting the minimums.
- 0 - Null:** Failed to comply with this requirement.



5. Interview or Site Visit: If deemed necessary, the Commission Member may require an interview (online or face-to-face) with the appointed representative of the applicant educational institution or arrange a site visit from a member of the commission. This action is usually scheduled if the material provided by the applicant is insufficient for a clear judgment, or further clarification about specific accreditation standards. The travel costs and expenses related to the interview or site visit will be paid by the applicant educational institution. The interview or site visit goals, schedule, and budget will be settled in advance by the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation Secretary in consultation with the applicant. Usually, a 1-2 hours online interview or 1-day visit will be enough to resolve any concerns.

6. Announcement: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation Secretary will communicate the results of the initial evaluation results status to the members of the Commission. The members of the Commission have 30 days since the announcement to review and amend the conclusions and grades of the initial accreditation report.





7. Conclusion: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation Secretary will communicate the results of the accreditation status and any grade amendments from the Commission Members to the president of the EAHEA. The president will review the accreditation report to resolve any discrepancies that may have occurred during the standards grading. The final grades of the accreditation report are endorsed by the president of the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation.

The EAHEA Secretary will inform the new applicant educational institution of the conclusions of the accreditation report and will provide suggestions, if applicable. In the case that full accreditation is gained, the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation Secretary will send the corresponding accreditation certificate.

In any case, the detailed accreditation report is always sent to the applicant.

The resulting average will determine the accreditation status:

Full accreditation: Final average ranging 3,0 - 4,0. Requires re-accreditation review every five years.

Conditional accreditation: Final average ranging 2,0 - 2,9. This is a one-year-long temporary status. The educational institution must undergo a new re-accreditation review within 12 months of conditional accreditation. If full accreditation is not achieved in this review, the accreditation status will be denied.

Denial of accreditation: Final average ranging 0,0 - 1,9. The Accrediting Commission will explain the reasons for the denial. The accreditation fee is not refundable in this situation. Any educational institution, in this case, may reapply for accreditation after a 12-month-period.



Benefits of the Accreditation from EAHEA:

1. Improvement: The accredited member institution going through the self-assessment process guided by the European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation standards will learn how to further enhance its educational quality, how to improve its internal and administrative processes, and how to optimize its overall outcome.

2. Recognition: Each European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation accredited member institution will receive an accreditation certificate. This status may be permanently checked by any third party at the EAHEA website.

3. Promotion: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation will promote its accredited members through the internet and will forward any request to the appropriate institution. The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation will finally reinforce the decision process of some potential students by emailing verification of the accreditation status of its members to any questioner.

ACCREDITATION BENEFITS





4. Networking: All the EAHEA accredited member institutions aim towards similar quality and long terms goals despite their country of origin. This goal is reassured by the EAHEA accreditation they share. This fact facilitates the establishment of diverse types of international cooperation and agreements among member institutions, such as learning from other colleagues around the world, establishing academic synergies, creating cooperative global market strategies, etc.

5. Quality Control: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation accreditation does not only provide a warranty of academic quality, educational integrity, and administrative responsibility of the accredited institutions but also ensures continuous quality monitoring and feedback. The EAHEA welcomes complaints, suggestions, and comments related to any member institution. These comments may provide useful and quick feedback to the institution about any academic or marketing actions it conducts. Comments are also efficient to help the institution in detecting problems as well as to monitor that EAHEA standards are respected.

6. Conflict Resolution: The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation may intervene in several ways in the resolution of conflict within the different layers of the accredited institution. The EAHEA may arbitrate disputes between members and/or students. The EAHEA may guide and support the institution during periods of serious difficulty, potential liability, insecurity of continuation, and even possible shut down. The European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation advice will be always aimed to preserve student welfare.



ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY



To be eligible for accreditation by EAHEA, an institution must meet the following requirements:

-  It is a formal or distance learning establishment that offers certificates, diplomas, or degrees at all levels.
-  It has an identified body of individuals actively involved in a prescribed learning format and setting. Programs offered must provide a clearly interactive component of educational methodology appropriate to the subject matter and expected training outcomes.
-  It can demonstrate continuous, ongoing, and successful operation of the institution in the delivery of education and/or training programs for at least one consecutive year immediately prior to application. At a minimum, one graduating class must have completed their training.
-  It has a continuous operation. The term "continuous operation" means that the principal educational and training activities of an institution, for which accreditation or reaccreditation is sought, have proceeded as scheduled without interruption.
-  Exceptions may be recognized after the fact when the interruption is caused by forces of nature, civil disorder, or abrupt and unforeseeable change in law or regulation affecting the institution.



-  An institution may apply for an exception before the fact upon application to the Accrediting Commission and a showing of good cause for the exception. Applications must be submitted in a timely manner, considering the circumstances, in order to permit proper consideration of the application.
-  It has been under the same ownership and/or control for at least one year immediately prior to application. This requirement may be waived by the Accrediting Commission upon provision of acceptable documentation showing the applicant institution is owned or controlled by an educational organization with a reputable history of stable operations and by individuals with extensive credentials that demonstrate competent administration of an accredited institution.
-  It agrees upon application and accreditation to abide by the EAHEA Bylaws, Principles of Ethics, EAHEA Standards for Accreditation, and EAHEA Standards for Accreditation Quality, policies and procedures and to support the goals and integrity of the accreditation process.
-  It has demonstrated a record of responsible financial management (minimum 1 year) with resources sufficient to maintain quality training and educational services and to complete the instruction of all enrolled participants.



European Agency for Higher Education and Accreditation (EAHEA) is an independent and international quality assurance, rating, and accreditation agency. EAHEA grants accreditation to educational institutes, vocational institutions, distance learning centers, online courses, corporations, professionals, qualified individuals, instructors, and students, and oversees accreditation standards.



+372 6 346 234



info@eahea.org



www.eahea.org



Lõõtsa 6, Tallinn, Estonia