



EAHEA
ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

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EAHEA®
European Association for Higher Education Advancement

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. Around the world, it is one of the main ways in which students, families, government officials and the press can tell that an institution or program provides quality education.

Accreditation may be institutional or programmatic. It is a voluntary, comprehensive and objective process of external peer review, which determines whether an institution or program meets the standards of the accrediting body for institutional and educational quality and effectiveness. EAHEA provides institutional accreditation to its members.

Whether a college, school, university, distance learning center, program or course is accredited matters for several reasons:

- Students who seek grants and loans from governments, and sometimes from associations and organizations, usually need to attend an accredited university, school, college, distance learning center, online course or program.
- Employers ask whether an institution or program is accredited before they provide tuition assistance to their employees, evaluate the credentials of new employees or make a charitable contribution.
- Governments require accreditation before they make public funds, grants or loans available to students or institutions, and in some professional fields before they allow students to sit for licensure examinations.

Accreditation can seem complicated. This page answers two basic questions: what is accredited, and why accreditation is important.

What Is Accredited?

Universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, colleges, schools, distance learning centers, lifelong learning centers, online courses, corporations, agencies, professionals and instructors can be accredited. Around the world, schools, colleges, universities and distance learning centers are accredited by one of hundreds of international accrediting organizations, and programs are accredited by programmatic accrediting organizations.

The accredited institutions can be found in the Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by EAHEA, which holds information on institutions and programs around the world and links to their websites. To learn about a specific school, college, university or distance learning center, open the Accredited Members Directory and type in the name of the institution. To learn about the institutions of a specific country, select the country.

Why Is Accreditation Important?

Accreditation gives the public, and in particular prospective students, the assurance that an education provider meets education quality standards in the global market.

Prospective students who look at an education provider abroad often find it hard to compare its quality with the standards they know from their own country. EAHEA accreditation offers a global education quality reference that is not limited by local regulations.

The compilations of institutions kept by the European ENIC-NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) and the UNESCO International Association of Universities (IAU) usually cover traditional universities that are recognized by their national Ministry of Education. Many higher education initiatives do not fit that category: institutions with innovative pedagogical approaches, programs of study that the traditional education establishment has not yet recognized, and providers that respond to current global market demand. EAHEA accreditation gives these institutions an independent review of their quality.

In a global market, accreditation takes many forms, and government accreditation is not the only reference. International schools have a growing influence on the future of higher education. For many institutions the question is therefore less who accredits them and more how much accreditation they need. Rather than adding more local accreditations in their home country, they may look for a truly international accreditation standard that serves them in the global market.

Accreditation Types

1. Full Accreditation: This institutional accreditation type is for universities, educational institutes, vocational institutions, colleges, schools, corporations and similar organizations that use traditional education methods. Full Accreditation covers the institution only (administration, organization, finances, educational system, student and alumni services and so on). It does not cover degrees, programs or courses.

2. Online Accreditation: This institutional accreditation type is for open universities, distance learning centers, lifelong learning centers, online courses and similar organizations that use online education methods. Online Accreditation covers the institution only (administration, organization, finances, educational system, student and alumni services and so on). It does not cover degrees, programs or courses.

3. Program Accreditation: This programmatic accreditation type is for universities, educational institutes and business schools that offer a specific degree program (doctoral, master's, bachelor's, associate and so on) with a curriculum of more than 300 clock hours.

4. Course Accreditation: This programmatic accreditation type is for educational institutes, vocational institutions and online courses that offer a specific course with a curriculum of less than 300 clock hours. Examples are online courses, vocational and avocational courses, ESL programs of study, foreign language training, seminars and workshops, corporate in-house training, test preparation, industry certification preparation and licensing preparation.

Important notice: Full and Online Accreditation do not cover the programs and courses of an institution. To have a program or course accredited, an institution applies for Program Accreditation or Course Accreditation for each program or course. These are independent services that can be applied for at any time, with or without Full or Online Accreditation.

Accreditation Application Steps

Over the years, EAHEA has accredited hundreds of institutes on the basis of the quality of the education they provide, regardless of their location or financial standing. Reviews are supported by the Points Profile System and by EAHEA representatives around the world. The process has three steps:

Step 1: The institute submits its application through eahea.org and receives a free consultation from a representative of the EAHEA Secretariat. Once the Secretary has reviewed the application, the process moves to the next step.

Step 2: EAHEA visits the institution, or holds a video call with it, to review its facilities, faculty, educational standards and other aspects.

Step 3: After the visit report is submitted, the members of the Commission review it. If the institute qualifies, it receives EAHEA accreditation (Full, Online, Program or Course Accreditation). A detailed description of each stage is given on the Accreditation Process page.

What Are the Accreditation Fees?

All service fees follow the World Bank Country Income Classification, and additional discounts may apply depending on the economic situation of the country in which your institution carries out most of its activity or in which it is legally established. For the **Institutional Accreditation Fees**, please visit the Service Fees page.

Payment and renewal: The price of Full and Online Accreditation is paid in two steps: the Application Fee first, and the Accreditation Fee after EAHEA confirms eligibility. The price of Program and Course Accreditation is paid at once, in full, when the application is made. Accreditations are valid for one year and are renewed each year. Full and Online Accreditation are renewed with the annual membership fee, and with the renewal fee and a re-accreditation review in every fifth service year. Program Accreditation is renewed free of charge for holders of a valid Full or Online Accreditation, and Course Accreditation is renewed free of charge for holders of a valid Full or Online Accreditation or Associate Membership; otherwise both are renewed for the renewal fee. A major change to an accredited program or course is reviewed again and a change fee is charged.

About the EAHEA Accreditation Status

1. EAHEA accreditation is not a substitute for legal regulation: Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental peer review process. Accreditation by EAHEA conveys only that the higher education institution meets the educational standards of EAHEA. It is not intended to substitute legal authorization, recognition or regulation under local government laws. Legal authorization, recognition or regulation, and government accreditation, are the subject of different reviews.

2. Institutional accreditation: Full and Online Accreditation evaluate the institution as a whole. Programs and courses are accredited separately, through Program Accreditation and Course Accreditation. EAHEA accreditation may support the approval of specific programs, but it is not a licence to practise a profession.

3. Global and international scope: EAHEA accreditation focuses on educational quality from a global and international perspective, and not on narrow interests, political action or educational fashions. EAHEA is aware that countries differ in how they meet the quality standards, and it therefore examines every higher education institution with respect for its institutional autonomy and under a non-discriminatory policy. Because of this global policy, EAHEA is not part of the governmental agencies of any country. The academic mobility and credit transferability of accredited institutions always remain subject to the policy of the receiving country or institution.

4. Accredited Membership of EAHEA: Full Accreditation and Online Accreditation give the right to Accredited Membership of EAHEA, which is a full membership. The institution becomes an Accredited Member automatically, without a separate application and without a separate membership fee. An Accredited Member takes part in the determination of the management of EAHEA, has the right to vote at the General Assembly and has the other rights that the Articles of Association give to members, for as long as the accreditation lasts. The Management Board decides whether a member with Accredited Membership (Full or Online Accreditation) or Associate Membership is admitted as a member of the General Assembly.

5. Code of Ethics and use of the EAHEA name and logo: For as long as it is accredited, your institution complies with the rules of conduct that EAHEA sets in the Code of Ethics Declaration Form, and uses the EAHEA name, logo, emblem, seal and badges only as the Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines allow. Both documents are available on the Documents & Forms page.

6. Contact details, checks and complaints: Your institution informs EAHEA within 30 days of any change in its contact details and keeps the information in the Institutional Contact Declaration & Update Form accurate, complete and up to date. If it does not, EAHEA may suspend the accreditation and the membership of the institution. EAHEA may check, with or without prior notice, whether your institution complies with its obligations, and your institution facilitates the check. EAHEA may examine any complaint about your institution that comes from a third party and may ask for an oral or written defence; depending on the seriousness of the complaint, the accreditation may be suspended or revoked. A suspended or revoked status is published in the public directory with a short reason for five years from the date of the decision. After that the institution is removed from the directory, and the records stay in the EAHEA archive.

Rights of EAHEA Accredited Institutions

EAHEA accredited institutions are entitled to:

- Announce their accreditation by EAHEA.
- Use the EAHEA name, logo, emblem, seal and badges as the Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines allow.
- Receive an accreditation certificate.
- Be listed on the EAHEA website as an accredited member, with a link to their own website.
- Use the EAHEA monitoring and feedback services.
- Be informed periodically of any comments received on their behalf.
- Receive an invoice for tax deduction purposes.
- Promote their institution through the EAHEA Education Network.
- Receive the EAHEA news alerts and newsletter.
- Receive discounts for all EAHEA sponsored events.
- Be an Accredited Member of EAHEA with the right to vote at the General Assembly (Full and Online Accreditation; the Management Board decides on the admission to the General Assembly), for as long as the accreditation lasts.

What Do You Get upon Institutional Accreditation?

- Institutional Accreditation Certificate
- Education Quality Certificate
- Education Quality Audit Report

- EAHEA Accredited Institution Seal and Badges
- Institutional Members Directory listing
- E-delivery news alerts and newsletter
- Discounts for all EAHEA sponsored events

Legal Notice and Disclaimer: EAHEA grants accreditation to educational institutes, vocational institutions, distance learning centers, online courses and corporations, and certification to professionals, qualified individuals, instructors and students. EAHEA does not award titles or degrees to the students of an accredited institute and cannot authorize a diploma, employment, the opening of an office or similar matters. EAHEA does not control or oversee the documents, certificates, diplomas, titles, degrees, rights and authorizations issued by an accredited institution; all rights and legal liabilities connected with them belong to the institution that carries out the transaction. EAHEA periodically reviews the educational quality of an institution and the up-to-date curriculum of a course or program, and reports to the institution concerned.

Accreditation Process

An educational institution that wishes to earn accreditation from the European Association for Higher Education Advancement (EAHEA) demonstrates, through its application for accreditation, that it complies with the education quality standards of EAHEA, or that it commits to complying with them.

1. Application for Accreditation

EAHEA provides an application for accreditation that guides applicant institutions in preparing the Self-Study Report and the required documentary evidence. The applicant applies online and answers the required questions.

The application is a legally binding contract between EAHEA and the applicant institution, and it states the rights and obligations of both parties.

The applicant institution may ask for verification of its eligibility for accreditation by paying the Application Fee. Once the EAHEA Secretary confirms the eligible options, the institution may pay the Accreditation Fee.

EAHEA does not start an accreditation process without the corresponding application and payment of the Application Fee.

2. Consideration of Eligibility

Accreditation is aimed at higher education institutions and at vocational and avocational institutions. An eligible institution can be any kind of organization, entity or company that is properly authorized or incorporated to conduct educational teaching and certification, and to award degrees, certificates or other educational or professional credentials.

Eligible entities prepare individuals to achieve the competencies and educational qualifications needed to begin working in a specific occupation. In other words, they prepare individuals in a branch of knowledge, science, art or business that has an application in a specific occupation, usually one that requires significant specialized training or a profession.

3. Accreditation Fees

An educational institution that applies for accreditation pays the Accreditation Fee once the EAHEA Secretariat has confirmed its eligibility, and before the evaluation of the accreditation process starts.

All service fees follow the World Bank Country Income Classification, and additional discounts may apply depending on the economic situation of the country in which your institution carries out most of its activity or in which it is legally established. The fees are listed on the Service Fees page.

4. Evaluation Process

The EAHEA Secretariat reviews and grades the application for accreditation and the attached documents, to assess how the applicant institution addresses each standard. Each standard is graded on a scale from 0 to 4:

- 4.0 A+ – Outstanding: no need for improvement.
- 3.0 B+ – Standard: may improve.
- 2.0 C – Acceptable: requires improvement.
- 1.0 E – Insufficient: does not meet the minimum.
- 0.0 F – Null: failed to comply with the requirement.

5. Interview or Site Visit

If necessary, a Commission Member may ask for an interview (online or face to face) with the appointed representative of the applicant institution, or arrange a site visit by a member of the Commission. This is usually scheduled when the material provided by the applicant is not sufficient for a clear judgment, or when further clarification about specific accreditation standards is needed.

6. Announcement

The EAHEA Secretariat communicates the results of the initial evaluation to the members of the Commission. The members of the Commission have 30 days from the announcement to review and amend the conclusions and grades of the initial accreditation report.

7. Conclusion

The EAHEA Secretariat communicates the accreditation result and any grade amendments from the Commission Members to the President of EAHEA. The President reviews the accreditation report to resolve any discrepancies that may have occurred in the grading of the standards, and endorses the final grades of the report.

The EAHEA Secretary informs the applicant institution of the conclusions of the accreditation report and gives suggestions where applicable. If Full Accreditation is granted, the EAHEA Secretary sends the corresponding accreditation certificate. In every case, the applicant receives the detailed accreditation report.

The final average determines the accreditation status:

- **Full Accreditation:** final average of 3.0 – 4.0. A re-accreditation review is required every five years, and the annual membership fee is paid each year.
- **Conditional Accreditation:** final average of 2.0 – 2.9. This is a temporary status of one year. The institution undergoes a new re-accreditation review within 12 months of the conditional accreditation. If Full Accreditation is not achieved in this review, accreditation is denied.

- **Denial of Accreditation:** final average of 0.0 – 1.9. The Accrediting Commission explains the reasons for the denial. The accreditation fee is not refundable in this case. The institution may reapply for accreditation after a period of 12 months.

Initial Inquiry and Applicant Process

Phase 1

- The institution or organization makes a Request for Information on the EAHEA website at www.eahea.org, or contacts the EAHEA Secretariat directly, to discuss the accreditation process.
- The institution submits a completed Online Application Form and the Application Fee for a preliminary determination of eligibility. The institution receives a letter of initial acceptance or rejection and, if it is eligible, further instructions.

Phase 2

- The institution completes the Application for Accreditation.
- The institution submits a completed Inquiry Questionnaire and the Accreditation Fee.

Phase 3

- The institution submits the necessary documentation.
- An on-site or online visit of the examination team is scheduled.
- The team conducts the on-site or online evaluation and sends a written team report to the institution for review and response.
- The institution submits its response to the examination team report to EAHEA.

Phase 4

- The Accrediting Body reviews the case and makes a decision on the initial accreditation.
- The decision of the Accrediting Body is sent to the institution.

Accreditation Benefits

Accreditation is a process that confirms that an educational institution meets certain standards of quality. For students, parents and employers it is a reliable sign that an institution has been evaluated and found to meet those standards. EAHEA accreditation brings the following benefits to higher education institutions and to the people who rely on them.

Benefits of Accreditation for Quality in Higher Education

1. Confidence: Accreditation gives students, parents and employers assurance that an institution meets recognized standards of quality, and that the education it provides is of high quality.

2. Better outcomes: Accredited institutions are expected to maintain strong academic programs and to provide their students with a range of resources and support services, which contributes to better student outcomes.

3. Reputation: Accreditation strengthens the reputation of an institution, which helps it to attract students, faculty and supporters.

Benefits of EAHEA Accreditation

1. Improvement: An accredited member institution goes through a self-assessment guided by the EAHEA standards. In the process it learns how to further enhance its educational quality, improve its internal and administrative processes and optimize its overall outcomes.

2. Recognition: Every EAHEA accredited member institution receives an accreditation certificate. Its status can be checked at any time by any third party on the EAHEA website.

3. Promotion: EAHEA promotes its accredited members on the internet and forwards any request it receives to the institution concerned. EAHEA also supports the decision of prospective students by confirming the accreditation status of its members by email to anyone who asks.

4. Networking: The accredited member institutions of EAHEA share similar quality and long-term goals, whatever their country of origin, and the EAHEA accreditation they have in common reinforces those goals. This makes it easier to build international cooperation and agreements among member institutions: learning from colleagues around the world, establishing academic synergies, developing cooperative global market strategies and more.

5. Quality control: EAHEA accreditation provides assurance of the academic quality, educational integrity and administrative responsibility of accredited institutions, and it includes continuous quality monitoring and feedback. EAHEA welcomes complaints, suggestions and comments about any member institution. These comments give the institution useful and prompt feedback on its academic and marketing activities, help it to detect problems and help EAHEA to monitor that its standards are respected.

6. Conflict resolution: EAHEA may help to resolve conflicts at the different levels of an accredited institution. It may arbitrate disputes between members and students, and it may guide and support an institution through periods of serious difficulty, potential liability, uncertainty about its continuation, or even a possible closure. EAHEA's advice always aims to protect the welfare of students.

7. Accredited Membership: Full Accreditation and Online Accreditation give the institution Accredited Membership of EAHEA, a full membership, automatically, with the right to vote at the General Assembly and a say in the determination of the management of EAHEA, for as long as the accreditation lasts. The Management Board decides whether a member with Accredited Membership (Full or Online Accreditation) or Associate Membership is admitted as a member of the General Assembly.

What Do You Get upon Institutional Accreditation?

- Accreditation Certificate
- Education Quality Certificate
- Education Quality Audit Report
- EAHEA Accredited Institution Seal and Badges
- Institutional Members Directory listing
- E-delivery news alerts and newsletter
- Discounts for all EAHEA sponsored events

The types of accreditation and their steps are described on the About Accreditation and Accreditation Process pages.

Accreditation Eligibility

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

- It is a formal or distance learning establishment that offers certificates, diplomas or degrees at any level.
- It has an identified body of individuals who are actively involved in a prescribed learning format and setting. The programs it offers include a clearly interactive component of educational methodology that is appropriate to the subject matter and the expected training outcomes.
- It can demonstrate the continuous and successful operation of the institution in delivering education and training programs for at least one consecutive year immediately before the application. At a minimum, one graduating class has completed its training.
- It operates continuously. “Continuous operation” means that the principal educational and training activities of the institution, for which accreditation or re-accreditation is sought, have proceeded as scheduled without interruption.
- Exceptions may be recognized after the fact when an interruption was caused by forces of nature, civil disorder, or an abrupt and unforeseeable change in law or regulation that affects the institution.
- An institution may also apply for an exception before the fact, by applying to the Accrediting Commission and showing good cause. The application is submitted in good time, considering the circumstances, so that it can be properly considered.
- It has been under the same ownership or control for at least one year immediately before the application. The Accrediting Commission may waive this requirement when acceptable documentation shows that 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.
- On application and on accreditation, it agrees to abide by the EAHEA Bylaws, the Principles of Ethics, the EAHEA Standards for Accreditation and the EAHEA Standards for Accreditation Quality, and the related policies and procedures, and to support the goals and integrity of the accreditation process.
- It has a record of responsible financial management (minimum one year) and resources that are sufficient to maintain quality training and educational services and to complete the instruction of all enrolled participants.

A newly established institution that does not yet meet the requirements on continuous operation and a graduating class, on ownership or control, or on financial management may apply by submitting a goodwill letter addressed to EAHEA. The letter describes the establishment, ownership, activities, finances and plans of the institution and confirms its commitment to the EAHEA standards. EAHEA decides at its discretion whether to accept the application on that basis.

The steps that follow the application are described on the Accreditation Process page, and the fees on the Service Fees page.

Accreditation Impact

Accreditation is more than a certificate. It opens the way to international recognition, academic opportunity and institutional trust. The sections below describe how EAHEA accreditation benefits your institution and your students.

Admissions & International Mobility

EAHEA accreditation gives your institution an internationally recognized quality assurance credential. It shows admissions committees, credential evaluators and partner institutions that your programs have undergone an independent external review against defined educational standards. For students, this means the following.

1. Smoother credential recognition: Accredited institutions can request EAHEA Degree Validation Certificates and Academic Qualification Equivalency Statements, which express local credits in their United States (USC), United Kingdom (CATS) and European (ECTS) equivalents. Students then have a documented, third-party reference when they apply for further study abroad or seek recognition of their qualifications for employment.

2. A verifiable status: Admissions officers, employers, graduate programs and anyone else can confirm the accreditation status of your institution on the EAHEA website at any time. EAHEA also answers inquiries from prospective students by confirming the accreditation status of a member institution on request, which gives applicants additional reassurance when they make their decision.

3. Access to a global network: As part of the international academic community of EAHEA, students benefit from an association with accredited institutions on several continents. The network supports academic mobility, cooperation between institutions and shared quality benchmarks, whatever the country of origin.

4. Participation in the World Conference on Education, Teaching, and Learning: Students and faculty of accredited institutions can take part in the annual international conference of EAHEA. The conference offers:

- The opportunity to meet and build professional networks with peers, researchers and educators from around the world.
- The chance, subject to review and approval, to present academic work as a poster presentation, oral presentation, student research project, capstone project, case study presentation, pilot study, project showcase or research-in-progress presentation, which gives students international experience early in their academic careers.
- The possibility of having research assigned an official DOI number and published as a formal academic output in the WCETL Journal, which adds a verifiable, citable publication to the academic record.

Institutional Prestige & Trust

1. External validation: Accreditation shows that an institution has voluntarily submitted to external peer review. This is a meaningful sign of its commitment to continuous improvement, transparency and accountability, which a self-declared quality claim cannot offer. The self-assessment process itself, guided by the EAHEA standards, helps institutions identify ways to strengthen their academic and administrative practices.

2. Tangible recognition assets: Accredited institutions receive an Accreditation Certificate, an Education Quality Certificate, an Education Quality Audit Report, the official Seal and Badges and a listing in the EAHEA Institutional Members Directory. Together they reinforce the credibility of the institution with prospective students, faculty and supporters.

3. Wider visibility: EAHEA promotes accredited institutions through its own channels and forwards relevant inquiries to the institution concerned, which extends their visibility to a wider international audience.

4. Ongoing quality assurance: Beyond the accreditation decision itself, EAHEA provides continuous quality monitoring, welcomes feedback from students and stakeholders, and can offer guidance in resolving disputes or in supporting institutions through periods of difficulty, always with the welfare of students as the guiding priority. This continuing oversight gives the credential lasting value.

5. International Higher Education Day: EAHEA organizes and celebrates International Higher Education Day every year on June 19, a tradition it has kept for many years. Accredited members and their students are welcome to take part in the events held around the world, which connect institutions to a global academic community.

6. World Higher Education List: WHELIST, coordinated by EAHEA, is a global directory of universities and higher education institutions worldwide, with detailed information and guidance for students and other stakeholders. Accredited institutions have the right to be published in this directory, and they may also be considered for the annual WHELIST rankings, which recognize leading educational institutions in different categories and give them additional international visibility.

The accreditation types are described on the About Accreditation page, and the other benefits on the Accreditation Benefits page.



EAHEA®

European Association for Higher Education Advancement

EAHEA is a European-based non-governmental, independent, and international quality assurance, rating, certification, and accreditation association, founded in 1997 and working to improve the educational quality of institutes and institutions globally. EAHEA grants accreditation to universities, colleges, schools, educational institutes, vocational institutions, distance learning centers, online courses, and corporations; and grants professional certification to professionals, qualified individuals, instructors, and students.

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