ACCREDITATION REGULATIONS



EAHEA®

European Association for Higher Education Advancement

Document Control

Document	Accreditation Regulations
Version	4.0
First issued	September 1997
Last updated	November 2026
Document owner	Secretariat of EAHEA
Approving body	Management Board of EAHEA
Review	At least every five years, and whenever a rule that this document relies on changes
Replaces	The previous edition of this document
Related documents	General Provisions; Accreditation Standards; Accreditation Quality Standards; Principles of Ethics; Code of Ethics; Commissions Charter; Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines; Documents 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3
Language	English. The English text is the official version.

Revision History

Version	Date	Description
1.0	September 1997	First edition.
2.0	April 2020	Revised edition.
3.0	April 2024	Revised edition.
4.0	November 2026	Full revision: aligned with the General Provisions, the Commissions Charter and the current services and fees structure of EAHEA.

Regulations for Accreditation

These Regulations set out how EAHEA accredits institutions, programs and courses. They are read together with the General Provisions, the Accreditation Standards, the Accreditation Quality Standards, the Principles of Ethics, the Commissions Charter and the accreditation agreement that the institution accepts.

1. Accreditation Services

1.1. Nature of accreditation: EAHEA accreditation is a voluntary, independent and non-governmental peer review of the quality of an educational institution, program or course. It examines whether the institution, program or course meets the EAHEA Standards for Accreditation on the date of the decision, and it encourages continual improvement in educational practice. It is not a license or an authorization from a government, it does not give degree-awarding powers, and it does not replace national licensing, recognition or regulation.

1.2. The four services: EAHEA provides four accreditation services. Each service is independent of the others, starts with its own application, and results in its own certificate and validity period. An institution does not need to hold any other EAHEA service or membership to apply for one of them.

Service	Scope	Not included
Full Accreditation	Institutional accreditation of universities, colleges, schools, educational institutes, vocational institutions, corporations and similar bodies that use traditional education methods.	The degrees, programs and courses of the institution
Online Accreditation	Institutional accreditation of open universities, distance and lifelong learning centers, online course providers and similar bodies that use online education methods.	The degrees, programs and courses of the institution
Program Accreditation	Programmatic accreditation of a specific degree program (doctoral, master, bachelor, associate or similar) with a curriculum of 300 clock hours or more.	Institutional accreditation and other programs
Course Accreditation	Programmatic accreditation of a specific course (for example an online course, a vocational or avocational course, a language program, a seminar or workshop, corporate in-house training, or test, industry certification or licensing preparation) with a curriculum of less than 300 clock hours.	Institutional accreditation and other courses

1.3. Scope of a status: The Accreditation Status of a program or a course applies only to that program or course, at the level and in the delivery mode that were evaluated. An organization that administers and controls all aspects of its programs from a central headquarters is accredited as a single entity. A site that is partly under local control applies as a separate entity.

1.4. Credits and degrees: EAHEA does not award academic credit to students and does not confer degrees. Academic credit and degrees can be awarded only by institutions that are authorized to do so under the law of their country, and the transfer of credit between institutions is decided by the receiving institution. The credit-related services of EAHEA are separate services with their own regulations and are not part of accreditation.

2. Accreditation Commission

2.1. The Commission: The Accreditation Commission is established and governed by the Commissions Charter. It reviews the result of every evaluation independently of the Secretariat that prepares it, decides on Conditional Accreditation, denial, suspension, revocation and reinstatement of an Accreditation Status, and reviews requests for reconsideration.

2.2. Impartiality: The members of the Commission follow the Code of Ethics. A member who has a conflict of interest in the matter does not take part in its review or decision.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible, an institution must be an organization, entity or company properly authorized or incorporated under the law of its country to conduct educational teaching and certification, or to award degrees, certificates or other educational or professional credentials, and it must meet these requirements:

3.1. Delivery: It offers education in a formal or distance learning format, with an interactive component suited to the subject matter and the expected learning outcomes, and it has an identified body of learners actively taking part.

3.2. Operation: It has operated continuously and successfully for at least one (1) consecutive year immediately before the application, and at least one graduating class has completed its training. “Continuous operation” means that the principal educational activities for which accreditation is sought have proceeded as scheduled without interruption. EAHEA may recognize an exception where an interruption was caused by force majeure, civil disorder or an abrupt and unforeseeable change in law or regulation. An institution may also ask for an exception in advance, giving good cause and applying in good time.

3.3. Ownership: It has been under the same ownership or control for at least one (1) year immediately before the application. EAHEA may waive this requirement on acceptable documentation showing that the institution is owned or controlled by an educational organization with a reputable history of stable operations.

3.4. Finances: It has a record of responsible financial management of at least one (1) year, with resources sufficient to maintain quality education and training and to complete the instruction of all enrolled participants.

3.5. Commitment: It agrees, on application and on accreditation, to abide by the Standards, the Principles of Ethics and the policies and procedures of EAHEA, and to support the goals and integrity of the accreditation process.

3.6. Units of larger institutions: A unit within a larger institution, for example a corporate training division or the continuing education department of a university, may apply if it is a discrete unit with its own management and budget and with clear responsibility for enrollment, curriculum, faculty, student outcomes and refunds, as applicable.

3.7. Newly established institutions: A newly established institution that does not yet meet requirement 3.2, 3.3 or 3.4 may apply with a goodwill letter, which describes its establishment, ownership, activities, finances and plans and confirms its commitment to the Standards. EAHEA decides at its discretion whether to accept the

application on that basis. The Eligibility Checklist helps an institution to check these requirements before it applies.

4. Application

4.1. Online application: The institution applies online at apply.eahea.org. It chooses its country and the accreditation service, completes the application, accepts the Terms and Agreement, and pays the Application Fee. EAHEA does not start an accreditation process without the application and the Application Fee.

4.2. Eligibility confirmation: EAHEA reviews the application and confirms in writing whether the institution is eligible and which options are open to it. Full Accreditation and Online Accreditation continue with the Accreditation Fee, which the institution pays after that confirmation and before the evaluation starts. For Program Accreditation and Course Accreditation, the institution pays the whole fee with the application.

4.3. Self-Study Report and documents: The institution completes the Application for Accreditation, which is its Self-Study Report, and submits the required documents through the online system: the application form of its service, the personnel form, the Institutional Contact Declaration, the Code of Ethics Declaration, the Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines declaration, and the legal and identity documents that the notice lists. An institution that already holds Full Accreditation, Online Accreditation or Associate Membership does not submit again the personnel form and the three declarations with a Program or a Course application.

4.4. Evidence for each standard: In its Self-Study Report the institution addresses every standard and gives evidence that the standard is met. Where a standard does not apply, the institution states why. Where a standard is not met, the institution states the reasons and how it intends to remedy the situation. A refusal or an unjustified delay to give the evidence or the explanations stops the process.

4.5. Stability during the review: From the submission of the Self-Study Report until the decision, the institution avoids substantive changes to its operations, such as new programs, major changes to programs or courses, additional sites or a change of location. If a change cannot be avoided, the institution informs EAHEA at once. EAHEA may then ask for an amended application, and the decision may be delayed.

4.6. Confidentiality: EAHEA keeps confidential the documents and data that the institution submits and the information about the accreditation process.

5. Evaluation

5.1. Method: The Secretariat reviews the Self-Study Report and the documents against the Accreditation Standards, using the Accreditation Quality Standards as the evaluation form, and grades how each standard is addressed on the following scale.

Grade	Level	Meaning
4	Outstanding	No need for improvement.
3	Standard	May improve.
2	Acceptable	Requires improvement.

Grade	Level	Meaning
1	Insufficient	Not meeting the minimums.
0	Null	Failed to comply with this requirement.

5.2. Institutional autonomy: EAHEA respects the autonomy of the institution, which may use its own methods or internal systems to assess its academic and business performance. The institution explains those methods clearly whenever they differ from the Standards. The process varies from applicant to applicant according to the circumstances, but every institution is measured against the same Standards.

5.3. Guidance: EAHEA gives the institution thoughtful guidance to help it find its own approaches and solutions to meet the Standards. In its reports it makes a clear distinction between what is required for accreditation and what is recommended for improvement.

5.4. Interviews and visits: An accreditation is normally evaluated from the Self-Study Report and its documents. Where the material is not enough for a clear judgment, where a complaint or a change requires it, or where EAHEA otherwise considers that circumstances warrant, EAHEA may require an interview with the representatives of the institution, or an online or on-site visit. EAHEA keeps interviews, visits and reports to the minimum that a sound judgment needs, and avoids duplicating the work of other review processes where it can.

5.5. Online visit: An online visit is made by video conference. It may include online meetings with management, staff and learners; a live review of the institution's online education system (its learning management system) and of the content of its courses and programs; and live attendance at online classes. The institution gives EAHEA the access to the system that these checks need. An online visit forms part of the evaluation.

5.6. On-site visit: An on-site visit is made at the premises of the institution or at the place where the education is delivered. It may include the inspection of facilities, records, documents and teaching, and meetings with staff and learners. The cost of an on-site visit is calculated separately for each visit and communicated to the institution in advance. EAHEA invoices it to the institution before the visit, the invoice must be paid before the visit takes place, and EAHEA does not make the visit until the invoice is paid.

5.7. Findings: EAHEA sends its written findings to the institution, which answers them within fifteen (15) days and may give clarification or new information. If the institution does not answer in that time, EAHEA decides on the evidence that it has. Programs that have no enrolled learners at the time of the evaluation are not evaluated in the evaluation report and are not considered by the Accreditation Commission in its review of the institution for initial accreditation.

6. Review, Decision and Result

6.1. Review: The Secretariat communicates the initial result to the members of the Accreditation Commission, who have thirty (30) days from the announcement to review and amend the conclusions and grades. The President of EAHEA reviews the report to resolve any discrepancy and endorses the final grades.

6.2. Essential items: The Accreditation Quality Standards name the essential items, which are the items on which the institution must reach at least the grade "Acceptable" (2) whatever the average. A grade below 2 on an

essential item prevents the result “Accreditation granted” whatever the average, and the result is then Conditional Accreditation at best.

6.3. Result: The final average of the grades decides the result.

Average grade	Result	What follows
3.0 to 4.0	Accreditation granted	The certificate is issued for its validity period and the institution is listed in the public directory.
2.0 to 2.9	Conditional Accreditation	A temporary status of one year. The institution must pass a new review within 12 months, and if accreditation is not achieved in that review it is denied.
0.0 to 1.9	Denial of Accreditation	The Commission explains the reasons in writing. The Accreditation Fee is not refunded. The institution may apply again after a period of 12 months.

6.4. Notice and report: The Secretariat informs the institution of the result in writing, with suggestions where they apply, and sends the detailed accreditation report. EAHEA communicates the result of an evaluation only to the applicant. If accreditation is granted, EAHEA issues the certificate and the report, and the institution may use the seal and badges that correspond to its status.

7. Reconsideration

7.1. Request: The institution may ask the Secretariat in writing, giving reasons, to reconsider a decision, including a decision that its application is not accepted, within thirty (30) days of the notice. EAHEA decides on the request in good faith, and its answer ends the internal review. If the institution makes no request in that period, the decision is final.

8. Validity, Renewal and Reaccreditation

8.1. Validity: An Accreditation Status is valid for the period stated on its certificate. EAHEA sends a renewal notice and an invoice before the period ends. A status that is not renewed ends and is not valid even if a reminder was not received. A renewal is not made by silence, and no payment is taken automatically.

8.2. Full and Online Accreditation: In the years of the re-accreditation review, the invoice is the renewal fee, which includes the review; in the other years it is the Yearly Membership Fee. In a re-accreditation year the institution submits the updated Application for Accreditation and the other documents that the renewal notice lists. EAHEA evaluates them under Section 5, and the review and decision follow Section 6.

8.3. Program and Course Accreditation: Program Accreditation is renewed automatically and free of charge for an institution that holds a valid Full Accreditation or Online Accreditation on the renewal date. Course Accreditation is renewed automatically and free of charge for an institution that holds a valid Full Accreditation, Online Accreditation or Associate Membership on the renewal date. An institution that holds none of these renews the status by paying the renewal fee. A suspended, revoked or ended Full Accreditation, Online Accreditation or Associate Membership does not give a free renewal.

8.4. Continuous operation: A reaccreditation applicant confirms that its classes have been taught continuously since its last grant of accreditation, and informs EAHEA of every change that took place in that time.

8.5. Late payment: If the renewal invoice is not paid by the due date in the notice, EAHEA may suspend the Accreditation Status, and if it is still not paid after the further period stated in the notices, EAHEA may revoke it.

9. Changes

9.1. Major Change: For Full Accreditation and Online Accreditation, a Major Change is a change to the name, legal status, ownership or control, legal address or delivery mode of the institution. For Program Accreditation and Course Accreditation, it is a change to the educational content (curriculum, syllabus), the duration, the name or title, the level or the delivery mode of the program or course. EAHEA decides whether a change is a Major Change.

9.2. Procedure: The institution informs EAHEA of a Major Change before it puts the change into practice or, where a law or an authority makes the change, without delay. EAHEA reviews the changed institution, program or course again and charges a change fee for the review. Until EAHEA confirms the status, the Accreditation Status does not cover the changed program or course, and EAHEA may suspend the status for a change to the institution. If the status is confirmed, EAHEA updates or reissues the certificate and the report.

9.3. Minor Change: A change that does not alter these elements, such as the correction of a typing error, a change of teaching staff or a change of contact details, needs only a notice to EAHEA, without review and without fee.

10. Monitoring, Suspension and Revocation

10.1. Monitoring: EAHEA may at any time review the website, social media pages, advertisements, enrollment documents, student feedback and other public statements of an accredited institution, and may open a review on its own decision or after a complaint. EAHEA may check, with or without prior notice, whether the institution complies with the Standards, the Principles of Ethics and the agreement, and the institution facilitates the check.

10.2. Corrective action, suspension and revocation: The General Provisions apply. Misleading advertising, misuse of the EAHEA name, seal or certificate, claiming a status that is not held, a false or forged document, the sale of qualifications, a breach of the Code of Ethics, failure to pay fees and conduct that damages the reputation of EAHEA or the integrity of accreditation may lead to immediate suspension or revocation. Accreditation depends on the payment of the fees that are due. A suspended or revoked status is published in the public directory for five (5) years.

11. Accredited Membership

11.1. Membership: 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 when the accreditation is granted, without a separate application and without a separate membership fee. The Management Board decides whether an Accredited Member is admitted to the General Assembly. The

Accredited Membership lasts as long as the accreditation lasts and ends or is suspended with it. Program Accreditation and Course Accreditation do not give membership.

12. Use of the Status

12.1. Accurate use: The institution states its Accreditation Status accurately and completely, with the exact status, the scope (the institution, or the named programs and courses only), the validity dates and a link to the EAHEA verification page. It uses the EAHEA name, logo, emblem, seal and badges only as the Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines allow.

12.2. No transfer: The accreditation affects exclusively the accredited institution and is not transferable to related third parties. If an accredited institution works with a non-accredited third party, it may state its own accredited participation, but it does not indicate or suggest that the activity itself, or any other party involved, is accredited.

13. Fees

13.1. Fees: The fees of each accreditation service, of the renewal and of the review of a Major Change are those of the Service Fees page. Fees are not refundable except an amount that was paid twice or by mistake. The cost of an on-site visit is invoiced separately under Section 5.6.

14. Complaints

14.1. Complaints about accredited institutions: EAHEA may receive and examine any complaint about an accredited institution that comes from a third party, whether or not that party is a student, a customer or another recipient of the services of the institution. EAHEA may ask the institution for an oral or written defense or explanation, which the institution gives in the time that EAHEA sets. According to the seriousness of the complaint, EAHEA may suspend or revoke the Accreditation Status.

15. Improvement

15.1. Suggestions: An accredited institution has the right to send suggestions that lead to the improvement of the standards, regulations, functioning and procedures of EAHEA from any point of view. The Accreditation Commission reviews them and proposes any change to the Management Board.

Contact Us

Phone: +372 634 6234

Email: eahea@eahea.org

Website: www.eahea.org

Address: Tallinn, Estonia

EAHEA®

European Association for Higher Education Advancement