

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT

Document 1.1:

INITIAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

This document guides an institution through the initial application for Full Accreditation or Online Accreditation. Program Accreditation and Course Accreditation follow the same steps, except that the whole fee is paid with the application in Step 1 and there is no separate Step 2. The steps are completed in order. EAHEA does not start an accreditation process without the application and the Application Fee, and does not start the evaluation before the Accreditation Fee is paid. The time the process takes depends mainly on how complete and how ready the institution's application is, and EAHEA does not fix a timeframe for it.

Before applying, the institution should read Document 1 for the scope of accreditation, the eligibility requirements and the general policies, and Document 2 for the Standards. The Eligibility Checklist (Document 1.3) helps the institution to check its readiness and to prepare its documents in advance.

Step	What happens	Fee
1	Online application and eligibility review	Application Fee
2	Payment of the Accreditation Fee after eligibility is confirmed	Accreditation Fee
3	Application for Accreditation (Self-Study Report) and documents	None
4	Evaluation, with interviews and visits where necessary	None; the cost of an on-site visit, if one is needed, is invoiced before the visit and must be paid before it takes place
5	Review and decision	None
6	Notice of the decision, report and certificate	None

STEP 1 – ONLINE APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

The institution applies online at apply.eahea.org. It chooses its country and the accreditation service, completes the online application, accepts the Terms and Agreement, and pays the Application Fee by card or by bank transfer. The fees follow the Service Fees page of www.eahea.org.

A newly established institution that does not yet meet the requirements on the period of operation, ownership or financial record (Document 1, Section 2) attaches a goodwill letter to its application. A sample is provided as Document 11.

EAHEA reviews the application and confirms in writing whether the institution is eligible and which options are open to it. If the institution is not eligible, EAHEA informs it of the reasons. The institution may ask for reconsideration as set out in Document 1, Section 4.5.

STEP 2 – ACCREDITATION FEE

After EAHEA confirms eligibility, the institution pays the Accreditation Fee. EAHEA does not start the evaluation before this fee is paid.

STEP 3 – APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION (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 required items are:

- Document 4 – Application for Institutional Accreditation (Document 6 for Program Accreditation, Document 7 for Course Accreditation)
- Document 5 – Academic / Administrative Personnel Form
- Document 8 – Institutional Contact Declaration & Update Form
- Document 9 – Code of Ethics Declaration Form
- Document 10 – Logo & Emblem Usage Guidelines, with the signed declaration
- The Articles of Association, the Registration Document, an invoice issued to the legal address of the institution, and the Passport or ID of the authorized signatory or director

An institution that already holds Full Accreditation, Online Accreditation or Associate Membership, or a Program Accreditation or a Course Accreditation, does not submit Documents 5, 8, 9 and 10 again with a Program Accreditation or Course Accreditation application. The forms are available as fillable PDF files at www.eahea.org under Documents and Forms. EAHEA states in its notices the time within which the application must be completed, and an application that is not completed in that time may be cancelled.

From the submission of the Application for Accreditation until the decision, the institution should avoid substantive changes to its operations, such as new programs, major changes to programs or courses, additional sites or a change of location. A Self-Study Report describes the institution at a given point in time, and EAHEA wishes the evaluation to focus on a stable picture. 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.

STEP 4 – EVALUATION

EAHEA reviews the application and its documents against the Standards in Document 2 and grades each standard as set out in Document 1, Section 4.1. Where the material is not enough for a clear judgment, EAHEA may require an interview or an online or on-site visit (Document 1, Section 4.2). In an online visit, EAHEA may hold online meetings, check the institution’s learning management system and the content of its courses and programs live, and attend online classes. An on-site visit is made at the institution’s premises. Its cost is calculated separately and invoiced to the institution before the visit, and the invoice must be paid before the visit takes place.

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. Except for financial statements, which EAHEA reviews separately, the items presented with the application are made available to the evaluators in the way that EAHEA states in its notices.

EAHEA sends its written findings to the institution, which answers them within fifteen (15) days. The answer may provide clarification or new information. If the institution does not answer in that time, EAHEA decides on the evidence that it has.

STEP 5 – REVIEW AND DECISION

The Secretariat communicates the initial result to the members of the Accreditation Commission (Document 2.3), who review and may amend the conclusions and grades within thirty (30) days. The President of EAHEA endorses the final grades. The possible results are accreditation granted, Conditional Accreditation and Denial of Accreditation (Document 1, Section 4.4).

STEP 6 – NOTICE OF THE DECISION

The Secretariat informs the institution of the decision in writing and sends the detailed accreditation report. If accreditation is granted, EAHEA issues the certificate, lists the institution in the public directory and sends the EAHEA seal and badges that correspond to its status. The institution may ask for reconsideration within thirty (30) days of the notice (Document 1, Section 4.5).

The institution then keeps its accreditation by renewing it as set out in Document 1.2.