


EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT

Document 2.3:

# COMMISSIONS CHARTER

This Charter is adopted by the Management Board of the European Association for Higher Education Advancement (EAHEA). It establishes three commissions: the Accreditation Commission, the Quality Assurance Commission and the Ethics Commission. Part 1 sets the rules that apply to all three, and Parts 2, 3 and 4 set out the purpose and the functions of each. Wherever an EAHEA document, certificate or notice refers to one of these commissions, it means the body established by this Charter.

## 1. COMMON PROVISIONS

**1.1. Composition.** Each commission has not fewer than three (3) and not more than seven (7) members, and always an odd number. Its members are persons of recognized experience in higher education, education and training, or quality assurance. At least one member of each commission is independent, which means that the member is not an employee, officer or Management Board member of EAHEA and does not represent an institution that holds an EAHEA accreditation or an authorization from EAHEA. A person may serve on more than one commission. A person who took part in a decision does not take part in the reconsideration or review of that decision.

**1.2. Appointment, term and removal.** The Management Board appoints the members of each commission. A member serves for three (3) years and may be reappointed once. A member may resign at any time by written notice. The Management Board may remove a member who no longer meets the conditions of this Charter, who seriously breaches the Code of Ethics, or who does not take part in the work of the commission without good reason. A vacancy is filled by the Management Board for the rest of the term.

**1.3. Chair and support.** The members of each commission elect its Chair from among themselves. The Secretariat provides each commission with administrative support, prepares its documents and keeps its records. Staff of the Secretariat attend the meetings without a vote.

**1.4. Meetings and decisions.** A commission meets whenever the Chair or the Secretariat considers that a matter needs a decision, and in any case as Parts 2, 3 and 4 provide. A meeting may be held online. A decision may also be taken in writing by electronic means when all members have received the documents and have been given a reasonable time to answer. A commission has a quorum when a majority of its members take part, and it decides by a majority of the votes cast. If the votes are equal, the Chair has a casting vote. The Secretariat records every decision and its reasons.

**1.5. Impartiality and confidentiality.** Every member signs the Code of Ethics Declaration (Document 9) before taking office and renews it as required. A member who has a conflict of interest, as defined in Document 9, in a matter before the commission declares it, does not take part in the discussion or the decision on that matter, and the recusal is recorded. The deliberations of the commissions, the evaluation and audit reports, the complaints and the personal and institutional data that the members receive are confidential and are used only for the work of the commission.

**1.6. Records and reporting.** The decisions of each commission, their reasons and the documents on which they are based are kept in the archive of EAHEA. Each commission reports once a year to the Management Board on its work.

**1.7. Amendment.** Only the Management Board may amend this Charter. The Management Board publishes the Charter at www.eahea.org under Documents and Forms and reviews it at least every five (5) years.

## 2. ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

**2.1. Purpose.** The Accreditation Commission safeguards the quality, consistency and integrity of EAHEA accreditation decisions. It reviews the results of evaluations independently of the Secretariat that prepares them, and it acts in accordance with the Standards for Accreditation (Document 2), the Principles of Ethics (Document 2.1) and the accreditation process (Documents 1, 1.1 and 1.2).

**2.2. Functions.** The Accreditation Commission:

- reviews the conclusions and grades of every initial and re-accreditation evaluation and may amend them, as set out in Document 1, Section 4.3;
- decides, on that review, whether the final result is accreditation granted, Conditional Accreditation or Denial of Accreditation;
- decides on the suspension, revocation and reinstatement of an Accreditation Status when the Secretariat refers a case to it, except where Document 1.2 provides that a status is suspended or revoked for non-payment of fees, in which case the Secretariat reports the action to the Commission at its next meeting;
- reviews requests for reconsideration of a decision under Document 1, Section 4.5;
- advises the Secretariat on the interpretation and application of the Standards, and proposes changes to the Standards and to the accreditation process to the Management Board.

**2.3. Secretariat and President.** The Secretariat evaluates the application and communicates the initial result to the members of the Commission. The members 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. The President has no vote in the Commission. The Secretariat then informs the institution of the result in writing and gives its reasons.

**2.4. Meetings.** The Accreditation Commission meets at least twice a year.

**2.5. Personal certifications.** The decision on Professional Certification, Educator Certification and the Doctor of Excellence is taken by the majority of three votes: those of the President of EAHEA, the Secretary General and one member of the Accreditation Commission whom the Commission designates for each application. The

members of the Commission evaluate the supporting documents before the vote. The President and the Secretary General vote in this procedure only; they do not vote as members of the Commission. Where the votes are equal because a vote is not cast, the decision for which the President voted prevails.

**2.6. Limits.** The Accreditation Commission does not manage the administrative or financial affairs of EAHEA, which belong to the Management Board and the Secretariat, and it does not provide consultancy to institutions.

## 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION

**3.1. Purpose.** The Quality Assurance Commission safeguards the quality and the integrity of the EAHEA Credit Systems (Modular Units of Competency, Professional Advancement Credits, Institutional Learning Credits and Executive Units of Competency) and of the providers that are authorized to issue them. It acts in accordance with the Master Guidebook and the Operational Manuals of the Credit Systems.

**3.2. Functions.** The Quality Assurance Commission:

- reviews the applications of providers for authorization and for its annual renewal, and checks the level and the workload that a provider states for its programs;
- monitors the use of the credits by sampling programs and learner files, and by periodic and for-cause audits;
- issues audit findings and corrective action requests to a provider, and follows up on them;
- decides on the suspension, withdrawal and reinstatement of the authorization of a provider, and the Secretariat issues the written notice;
- investigates complaints about unauthorized, inflated or misleading use of the credits, and keeps a record of each investigation;
- prepares and reviews the Master Guidebook and the Operational Manuals, which the Secretary General checks and the President of EAHEA approves.

**3.3. Meetings.** The Quality Assurance Commission meets at least twice a year.

**3.4. Limits.** The Quality Assurance Commission does not decide on the accreditation of an institution, a program or a course, which belongs to the Accreditation Commission. It does not provide consultancy to providers.

## 4. ETHICS COMMISSION

**4.1. Purpose.** The Ethics Commission safeguards the application of the Code of Ethics (Document 2.2 and the Declaration in Document 9) by the persons to whom it applies: the members of EAHEA, the members of the commissions, the members of the Management Board, the employees of the Secretariat and everyone assigned to the processes and transactions of EAHEA.

**4.2. Functions.** The Ethics Commission:

- receives complaints that the Code of Ethics has been breached, and may also act on its own initiative;
- examines the matter, gives the person concerned the opportunity to be heard, and finds in writing whether the Code was breached;
- recommends the measure to be taken, and informs the complainant and the person concerned of its finding in writing;
- advises the Management Board on the Code of Ethics and proposes changes to it.

**4.3. Measures.** On a finding of breach, the Secretariat may end the duties of a person who is assigned to the processes and transactions of EAHEA. For a member of a commission or of the Management Board, the Management Board decides the measure, and the member concerned does not take part in that decision. The Management Board may also decide any other measure that the Articles of Association and the law allow.

**4.4. Meetings.** The Ethics Commission meets whenever a complaint or a matter needs its decision, and in any case at least once a year.

**4.5. Limits.** The Ethics Commission does not deal with complaints about accredited, member or recognized institutions, which follow the complaint procedure of EAHEA, or with requests for reconsideration of an accreditation decision, which follow Document 1, Section 4.5. A member of the Ethics Commission does not take part in a matter that concerns that member.