



Agency for Quality
Assurance and
Accreditation

DECREE OF THE BOARD OF AQ AUSTRIA ON THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION 2024

PRIVATHOCHSCHUL-
AKKREDITIERUNGSVERORDNUNG 2024 –
PRIVH-AKKVO 2024

adopted by the Board of AQ Austria on 12 December 2024

Decree of the Board of AQ Austria on the Accreditation of Private Higher Education 2024 (Privathochschul-Akkreditierungsverordnung 2024 – PrivH-AkkVO 2024)

On the basis of § 24 para. 6 Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz, HS-QSG), F. L. G. I no. 74/2011, last amended by the Federal Act published in F. L. G. I no. 50/2024, the following decree is issued:

1. Chapter: Scope of regulation

§ 1. Scope of regulation

- (1)** Since the entry into force of the Private Higher Education Act (PrivHG), as amended by F. L. G. I no. 77/2020, the term "private university college" has encompassed all educational institutions accredited under this Act. "Private university" refers to private university colleges which, in addition to the accreditation requirements pursuant to § 2 PrivHG F. L. G. I no. 77/2020 as amended by F. L. G. I no. 50/2024, also fulfil the requirements pursuant to § 4 PrivHG F. L. G. I no. 77/2020 as amended by F. L. G. I no. 50/2024.
- (2)** This decree governs the procedures and criteria for private higher education institutions for
 1. the initial institutional accreditation as a private university college and of its degree programmes;
 2. the extension of the institutional accreditation as a private university college;
 3. the programme accreditation at a private higher education institution;
 4. the extension of the programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 13 HS-QSG, which enable the acquisition of qualifications that are a prerequisite for access to a regulated profession;
 5. the changes to the institutional accreditation or programme accreditation at a private university college;
 6. the initial accreditation as a private university pursuant to § 4 PrivHG.
7. The following shall apply to § 1 para. 2: In this decree, the term "private university college" encompasses all higher educational institutions that are accredited in accordance with the PrivHG and includes private universities. In cases where the scope of regulation concerns only private universities, this decree explicitly refers to "private universities".
8. The following shall apply to § 1 para. 2 subpara. 4: Pursuant to § 24 para. 13 HS-QSG, and by way of derogation from § 24 para. 12 HS-QSG, programme accreditation must be extended after six years. An extension of accreditation of these degree programmes as part of the extension of institutional accreditation is only permissible after an uninterrupted accreditation period of twelve years of the degree programmes. § 24 para. 13 HS-QSG applies to accredited degree programmes that have not yet been extended as part of the extension of the institutional accreditation of the private university college as of 1 July 2024. The extension of the programme accreditation of these degree programmes is granted upon evidence that the criteria pursuant to § 19 are met.

2. Chapter: Definition of terms

§ 2. Definition of terms

The following definitions apply to the terms used in this decree.

- (1) Accreditation is the formal federal recognition of an educational institution (institutional accreditation) or of degree programmes at a private university college (programme accreditation) based on pre-defined criteria.
- (2) The institutional initial accreditation is an ex-ante accreditation of a private university college and includes both institutional aspects as well as the particular degree programmes applied for. Accreditation is granted upon evidence that the criteria pursuant to § 15 are met.
- (3) An extension of the institutional accreditation covers institutional aspects as well as the extension of the accreditation of the degree programmes accredited up to this date. Accreditation is granted upon evidence that the criteria pursuant to § 16 are met.
- (4) The extension of programme accreditation pursuant to § 24 para. 13 HS-QSG applies to degree programmes which enable the acquisition of qualifications that are a prerequisite for access to a regulated profession. Accreditation is granted upon evidence that the criteria pursuant to § 19 are met.
- (5) The programme accreditation is an ex-ante accreditation of a bachelor's or master's programme at a private university college as well as of a doctoral programme at a private university. Depending on the type of the degree programme applied for, accreditation is granted upon evidence that the criteria pursuant to §§ 17 or 18 are met. Further special provisions for joint study programmes and jointly offered study programmes as well as for degree programmes at another site than that of the institutional accreditation have been laid down in §§ 20 and 21.
- (6) As a rule, the term degree programme refers to bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes.
- (7) In this decree, the term "degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG" is used for degree programmes that enable the acquisition of qualifications that are a prerequisite for access to a regulated profession.
- (8) Changes to institutional and programme accreditations are changes at accredited private university colleges and their degree programmes that require an amendment of the official accreditation notification pursuant to § 14.
- (9) The term criterion encompasses definitions with regard to the assessment areas pursuant to § 24 HS-QSG and the accreditation requirements pursuant to § 2 ff PrivHG in the sense of the description of quantitative and qualitative characteristics and requirements that are used to determine and assess the fulfilment of the respective criterion. An assessment area (paragraph) may be assigned several criteria (subparagraphs), which in turn may include further sub-items (literae). The assessment of whether a criterion is met always takes into account the sub-items.
- (10) A criterion pursuant to para. 9 may be assessed as "fulfilled" or "not fulfilled". An assessment as "fulfilled" may be made subject to conditions if deficiencies are identified with regard to the specifications made in the criterion that can be remedied within a period of up to two years. Conditions may only be imposed if rectification is feasible within the specified period and the deficient subject matter of the application can be remedied by imposing conditions. If this is not the case, a criterion is to be assessed as "not fulfilled".

3. Chapter: Rules for submitting an application and carrying out the procedure

§ 3. Application

- (1) An application for initial institutional accreditation, extension of the institutional accreditation, programme accreditation, extension of the programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG as well as for changes to an institutional accreditation or programme accreditation shall be submitted in writing and electronically to the Secretariat of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria).
- (2) Pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, § 25 para. 7 and § 26 para. 1 subpara. 1 HS-QSG, the application for extension of the institutional accreditation or extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes shall be submitted no later than nine months before the end of the approval period; otherwise, the accreditation will expire.
- (3) The application shall indicate the applying legal entity based in Austria and the educational institution must carry out its scientific and/or scientific-artistic teaching and research activities in Austria. Proof of legal representation shall be enclosed. Where the applicant institution is a legal entity under private law, proof in the form of a current extract from the commercial register, the register of associations, or other appropriate evidence shall be enclosed.
- (4) An application for initial institutional accreditation, extension of institutional accreditation, programme accreditation, or extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG shall be complete and formally correct. It must contain all information and documents required to verify fulfilment of the criteria pursuant to §§ 15 ff. Furthermore, the following prerequisites shall be fulfilled:
 1. An application for institutional initial accreditation of a private university college shall comprise at least two bachelor's programmes as well as two consecutive master's programmes. An application for extension of the institutional accreditation as a private university college shall only be admissible if at least two accredited bachelor's programmes as well as two consecutive accredited master's programmes are offered.
 2. An application for institutional initial accreditation as a private university shall additionally contain an application for accreditation of at least one doctoral programme. The criteria pursuant to § 18 of this decree shall apply to the accreditation of the doctoral programme.
 3. An application for extension of the institutional accreditation as a private university shall only be admissible if at least one accredited doctoral programme is offered. If this is not the case, an application for the accreditation of a doctoral programme shall be submitted in the course of the application for extension of the institutional accreditation. The criteria pursuant to § 18 of this decree shall apply to the accreditation of a doctoral programme.
 4. After twelve years of uninterrupted institutional accreditation, a private university college may apply for extension of the institutional accreditation for a period of six to twelve years. The application shall set forth the requested period of extension. Corresponding evidence shall be submitted for the fulfilment of the criteria pursuant to § 16 for the entire period applied for. If the extension of institutional accreditation is sought for a period exceeding six years, evidence must in particular be provided that the quality development of the private university college in the areas of study and teaching, as well as research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts, is sustainably ensured through adequate processes and measures and that the financing for the entire accreditation period applied for is secured.
 5. Pursuant to § 2 para. 4 PrivHG, private university colleges that have been institutionally accredited for the first time may only submit further applications for programme accreditation once the degree programmes accredited in the course of the initial institutional accreditation have commenced operation. Proof of the commencement of these degree programmes shall be enclosed with the application for programme accreditation.

In the case of applications for programme accreditation, the application documents shall be accompanied by an executive summary, in which the institutional framework conditions and background relevant to the subject of the application for the new degree programme are presented with particular reference to the curricular focus.

- (5) The application submitted for change to an institutional accreditation and/or an accredited degree programme shall be complete and formally correct, with reference to those features to which the changes relevant to the decision pursuant to § 14 para. 1 and/or para. 2 apply. It shall contain all information and documents required for the decision on the change. This information and documentation shall provide evidence of which criteria pursuant to §§ 15 ff are affected by the requested change and to what extent the relevant criteria continue to be fulfilled.

The application documents shall be accompanied by an executive summary, from which the relevant institutional framework conditions and background of the application for the changes relevant to the decision pursuant to § 14 para. 1 and/or para. 2 can be derived, as well as the date from which the changes are to apply.

- (6) Applications shall be submitted in either German or English. If an application is submitted in English, the choice of language must be justified.
- (7) The Secretariat of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (hereinafter: Secretariat) shall verify the application as to its substantive completeness and formal correctness. Should any remediable shortcomings be identified, the Secretariat will grant a suitable period of at least two weeks for their remedy. If the shortcomings cannot be remedied or are not remedied in the period of time provided, the Board of AQ Austria shall reject the application.
- (8) Substantive completeness and formal correctness of the application shall be confirmed in writing by the Secretariat and shall include a reference to the obligation to pay the fixed and published procedure charges pursuant to § 11.
- (9) Applications may be modified until the Board of AQ Austria decides on the matter. Amendments to the application shall be submitted in accordance with § 3 para. 1. The Board of AQ Austria shall decide on the further procedure and procedural steps that need to be repeated or added pursuant to §§ 4 to 8. AQ Austria shall inform the applicant institution of any further procedural steps. The applicant institution shall bear any costs (procedure charges as well as the fixed expense allowances for experts) incurred by the amendment of the application and by procedural steps that need to be repeated or added.

§ 4. Procedure

- (1) The Board of AQ Austria decides on the procedure, taking into account the specific requirements of the application. The Board of AQ Austria may waive the need for an external review, request an experts' report or decide on a review incl. a site visit. Furthermore, the Board of AQ Austria can focus the review procedure on a selection of criteria according to §§ 15 ff, if this can be derived from the specific requirements of the application.
- (2) In the case of an institutional accreditation or an extension of the institutional accreditation, the Board of AQ Austria may separate the subjects of the application and carry out separate reviews. The applicant institution shall bear the costs incurred (procedure charges and fixed expense allowances for experts).
- (3) If accreditation of several degree programmes and/or changes of institutional accreditations or programme accreditations as well as extensions of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG are applied for at the same time, the Board of AQ Austria may treat the applications in a joint procedure. The Board of AQ Austria may reduce any procedure charges incurred in accordance with § 5 para. 2 in conjunction with para. 3 of the Procedure Charges Determination in force at the time the applications are submitted.
- (4) The Board of AQ Austria decides on the procedure for applications for changes to institutional accreditation or for changes to an accredited degree programme pursuant to § 4 para. 1.
- (5) At the request of the applicant institution, the Board of AQ Austria may take into account the results of other quality assurance procedures in order to facilitate the process. The corresponding evidence and results of past quality assurance procedures shall be attached to the application.
1. In the case of programme accreditation of jointly offered study programmes, the results of quality assurance procedures which have already taken place shall be recognised.

2. In case of the programme accreditation of joint study programmes with other higher education institutions from the European Higher Education Area, the Board of AQ Austria may, upon application of the applicant institution, apply the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes instead of §§ 5 to 8 and 17 to 21. If the programme accreditation is carried out according to the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes by a quality assurance agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the evidence and results of the completed quality assurance procedure shall be attached to the application for programme accreditation.

§ 5. Experts

- (1) If the Board of AQ Austria decides on a procedure involving experts, it shall appoint them. When appointing experts, the Board of AQ Austria strives for diversity and considers relevant areas of competence in the selection process, in accordance with the requirements of the application and the procedure:
 1. scientific, artistic or scientific-artistic qualification in the central disciplines of the private university college's course offerings;
 2. relevant research and/or teaching experience and knowledge of scientific research and/or teaching activities;
 3. professional activity in an occupational field relevant to the course offerings of the private university college;
 4. experience in quality management and quality assurance in higher education;
 5. experience in university management and organisational structures;
 6. experience in the development, implementation and evaluation of curricula;
 7. current experience as a student in one of the subject areas taught at the private university college.
- (2) In the case of an extension of institutional accreditation, the Board of AQ Austria may appoint additional experts to draw up subject-specific reports if it deems this necessary to appropriately consider the range of subjects at the private university college when assessing the fulfilment of the criteria.
- (3) In the case of programme accreditations and extensions of programme accreditations of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, the Board of AQ Austria the Board of AQ Austria may involve additional experts to assess relevant professional regulations. The applicant institution shall bear the incurred costs (expense allowances for experts).
- (4) The experts must be unbiased. They shall declare in writing that there are no grounds for bias and that they will keep confidential all facts they become aware of in relation with their work as experts. Bias may arise, in particular, from the reasons listed below, which must be substantiated in writing and communicated electronically to AQ Austria:
 1. contractual employment with the private university college within the last five years;
 2. participation in application procedures as an applicant at the private university college within the last five years;
 3. personal research collaboration or cooperation with individuals from the private university college within the last five years;
 4. examinations taken or degrees awarded at the private university college within the last five years;
 5. familial or close personal connections to individuals at the private university college.
- (5) The Secretariat shall inform the applicant institution about the experts and grant it a reasonable time period of at least one week to raise objections. Objections can be derived in particular from the grounds of bias mentioned in para. 4. Objections shall be justified and submitted in writing and sent electronically to AQ Austria. The applicant institution does not have the right to propose experts.

- (6) The Secretariat supports the activities of the experts throughout the entire accreditation procedure. Apart from the site visit, communication between the applicant institution and the experts shall take place exclusively via the Secretariat.
- (7) The Secretariat shall prepare the experts for their role and activities. The Secretariat shall support the experts in their activities, in particular with regard to the specific requirements of the subject of the application.

§ 6. Site visit

AQ Austria determines the agenda for the site visit at the applicant institution. The following principles apply:

- (1) The agenda shall be tailored to the specific requirements of the procedure and be coordinated with the applicant institution. AQ Austria names the relevant groups of the applicant institution that are to be heard.
- (2) The representatives of the relevant groups shall be nominated by the applicant institution. After consultation with the experts, the agenda for the site visit is set by AQ Austria in cooperation with the applicant institution.
- (3) The selection of students, if applicable, is carried out by the student representation of the applicant institution.
- (4) All relevant groups of the applicant institution shall be heard, and the individuals to be heard shall present their positions freely and without external influence.
- (5) In addition to the experts, representatives of the Secretariat take part in the site visit to support the experts in their work and to ensure the proper conduct of the site visit.

§ 7. Experts' reports

- (1) On the basis of the findings from the application documents and, if applicable, pursuant to § 4 from discussions with representatives of the applicant institution, the experts shall draw up a joint experts' report, consisting of observations and assessments to the criteria pursuant to §§ 15 ff and, if applicable, references to significantly good practice and/or recommendations for further enhancement.
- (2) A criterion can be determined as "fulfilled" or "not fulfilled" pursuant to § 2 para. 8. Experts may propose to the Board of AQ Austria that conditions be imposed if shortcomings in the specifications defining the criterion are identified and can be remedied within a period of up to two years. This only applies in cases where a criterion is determined to be "fulfilled"; if this is not determined, the criterion is to be assessed as "not fulfilled". This regulation applies to the following applications:
 - 1. extension of institutional accreditation;
 - 2. changes to institutional accreditations and accredited degree programmes;
 - 3. programme accreditation of private university colleges, provided that the institutional accreditation of the private university college has already been extended twice;
 - 4. extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG of private university colleges, provided that the institutional accreditation of the private university college has already been extended twice.
- (3) The experts' report shall be drawn up respecting the diversity of the experts' opinions, while at the same time aiming at a consensus in order to provide common findings and assessments with regard to the criteria and a concluding assessment. If diverging experts' opinions on an issue cannot be resolved, they shall be made transparent in the experts' report.

§ 8. Comment of the applicant institution

The Secretariat shall forward the experts' report to the applicant institution and grant it a reasonable period of at least two weeks for a written comment on the report. The comment shall be submitted to AQ Austria. Within the scope of the comment on the experts' report, the private university college may point out, in particular, factual errors. Upon receiving the comment, the Secretariat shall forward them to the experts for information. The Board of AQ Austria has to consider the experts' report and, if applicable, the comment of the applicant institution in the accreditation decision. If the Board of AQ Austria qualifies the comment or parts of the comment as an amendment to the application, the Board of AQ Austria shall decide on the further procedure and on procedural steps to be repeated or added as well as additional costs (procedure charges and expense allowances for experts) pursuant to § 3 para. 9.

§ 9. Decision and official notification

- (1) The Board of AQ Austria decides based on the application documents, the experts' report, if available, as well as any subject-specific experts' report obtained pursuant to § 5 para. 2 or para. 3, and the comment of the applicant institution, if available. The Board may of AQ Austria approve or reject the application.
- (2) If the Board of AQ Austria approves an application for accreditation, the accreditation period for initial institutional accreditation and for the first extension of institutional accreditation shall be six years.
- (3) In the case of an extension of institutional accreditation following the first six-year institutional extension, the Board of AQ Austria may grant accreditation for a period of up to twelve years.
- (4) With the exception of the accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, the accreditation period of degree programmes is tied to the institutional accreditation period. An extension of the accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG as part of the extension of institutional accreditation is only permissible after twelve years of uninterrupted accreditation of the degree programmes.
- (5) In the case of applications for an extension of institutional accreditation, changes to institutional accreditation or accredited degree programmes, programme accreditation as well as extensions of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG of private university colleges that have already successfully extended their institutional accreditation twice, the Board of AQ Austria may grant an accreditation subject to conditions if shortcomings are identified in the course of the accreditation procedure that can be remedied within a period not exceeding two years.
- (6) The decision of the Board of AQ Austria is subject to approval by the competent Federal Minister prior to the issuing of the official notification.
- (7) The official notification shall, in any event, include the following information:
 1. accreditation period;
 2. name of the legal entity of the private university college and name of the private university college;
 3. title, type, study format, total workload (in European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits), duration (in academic years, semesters, terms, or trimesters), language used and exact wording of the academic degree to be awarded (including its abbreviation) for the degree programme;
 4. number of study places of the degree programme;
 5. site at which the degree programme is offered;
 6. conditions, if any.

Pursuant to § 25 para. 6 subpara. 8 HS-QSG, the accreditation period begins at the time of delivery of the official notification. If an appeal is lodged against the official notification of the Board of AQ Austria, the accreditation period is suspended pursuant to § 25 para. 8 HS-QSG.

§ 10. Publication of the results of the procedure

No later than two months after the completion of the accreditation procedure, upon delivery of the official notification, AQ Austria and the private university college shall publish an easily accessible results report on the accreditation procedure on their respective websites for the duration of the accreditation period. The results report shall contain the decision of the Board of AQ Austria including the reasons given, the experts' report (incl. the experts' names as well as their institutional affiliations) and the applicant institution's comment (the latter only following their approval). Personal data, funding sources as well as business and trade secrets shall be exempt from publication.

§ 11. Costs

The applicant institution shall reimburse AQ Austria for the costs for the experts and pay a lump sum to be specified and published by the Board of AQ Austria. The lump sums as well as any procedural costs (costs of the experts – expense allowance, plus any applicable taxes, travel and accommodation costs) shall be prescribed by means of an official notification. The obligation to pay arises upon submission of the substantively complete and formally correct application according to § 3 para. 8 and falls due upon completion of the procedure. In the case of applications for initial institutional accreditation and for extension of institutional accreditation, 50 percent of the lump sum in accordance with the Procedure Charges Determination by the Board of AQ Austria regarding the procedural lump sums, shall be due upon submission of the substantively complete and formally correct application according to § 3 para. 8 and after the decision by the Board of AQ Austria on a deviating procedure pursuant to § 4 para. 1 and 2.

§ 12. Complaints

The applicant institution may appeal to the Appeals Committee of AQ Austria against the procedure as such, insofar as these do not concern the assessment of evidence to be raised in the context of an appeal. The appeal shall be submitted to AQ Austria in writing and in electronic form.

§ 13. Evidence for fulfilment of conditions

- (1) If the extension of institutional accreditation or the approval of changes to institutional accreditation or the change of accredited degree programmes as well as programme accreditation or extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG of private university colleges whose institutional accreditation has already been extended twice is granted subject to conditions, the applicant institution shall submit evidence to AQ Austria that the conditions have been fulfilled in writing and in electronic form within the period specified in the official notification (up to two years).
- (2) The evidence that the conditions have been fulfilled shall contain all information and documents necessary to confirm the fulfilment of the conditions.
- (3) The Board of AQ Austria shall decide if an assessment is necessary to determine whether the conditions have been fulfilled. If the Board of AQ Austria considers corresponding procedural steps to be necessary, §§ 5 to 12 shall apply. The applicant institution shall be informed about the determined procedure and shall bear the lump sum as well as any additional costs (expense allowances for experts, plus any applicable taxes, travel and accommodation costs).
- (4) If the applicant institution can prove that the conditions have been fulfilled, the Board of AQ Austria shall declare this by official notification. If the private university college cannot prove or cannot prove in time that the conditions have been fulfilled, the Board of AQ Austria shall revoke the accreditation by official notification.

The period for the fulfilment of the conditions shall commence at the time of delivery of the official notification pursuant to § 25 para. 6 subpara. 8 HS-QSG. If an appeal is lodged against the decision pursuant to para. 1 in accordance with § 25 para. 8 HS-QSG, the period for submitting evidence that the conditions have been fulfilled is suspended.

§ 14. Changes relevant to the official accreditation notification

(1) Changes to institutional accreditations or accredited degree programmes require in any case an amendment of the official accreditation notification, should the changes relate to the following characteristics:

1. change of the name of the legal entity of the private university college and change of the legal structure of the legal entity of the private university college;
2. change to the curriculum of the degree programme resulting in significant changes of the profile and the associated intended learning outcomes at degree programme level;
3. change regarding the number of study places of the degree programme;
4. change of the site of the degree programme.

The following shall apply to § 14 para. 1: In these cases, the Board of AQ Austria shall decide on the procedure according to § 4 para. 1.

The following shall apply to § 14 para. 1 subpara. 1: In these cases, the procedure pursuant to § 14 para. 2 shall apply.

The following shall apply to § 14 para. 1 subpara. 2: Significant changes to the curriculum may involve changes to the degree programme name, the total workload (in ECTS credits), the duration (in academic years, semesters, terms, or trimesters), the language used and/or the wording of the academic degree to be awarded (including the abbreviated form) and the organisational form of the degree programme or may be caused by the change and/or inclusion of special profile-defining features.

(2) The Board of AQ Austria must be informed of the following:

1. change to the name of the degree programme, unless this is due to a change pursuant to para. 1 subpara. 2;
2. change to the name of the private university college.

The following shall apply to § 14 para. 2: In these cases, the Board of AQ Austria acknowledges the notification of the change, and the decision is amended ex officio.

4. Chapter: Criteria and requirements for evidence and substantiation for the conduct of procedures

§ 15. Criteria for initial institutional accreditation

The following criteria shall apply to the initial institutional accreditation of private university colleges or private universities. If, in the course of the institutional initial accreditation, an application for accreditation as a private university pursuant to § 4 PrivHG is submitted, this application shall contain an application for accreditation of at least one doctoral degree programme. The criteria pursuant to § 18 of this decree shall apply to the accreditation of the doctoral degree programme.

(1) Profile and objectives

The private university college defines an institutional profile and derives objectives for its activities, ensuring that the academic standards are complied with. The latter encompass:

1. the freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination of the arts and their teaching;

2. the connection of research and teaching;
3. the diversity of scientific and artistic theories, methods and doctrines.

(2) Development planning

1. The private university college has a development plan which is in line with its profile and objectives and which specifies longer-term objectives and strategies for their achievement. For the first six years after accreditation as a private university college, the development plan sets out how the objectives set for this period can be achieved with the planned measures and the resources deployed for this purpose. The development plan shall be attached to the application for institutional accreditation and includes:
 - a. designation of focal points and planned activities in teaching and research;
 - b. information on structural and content-related development planning;
 - c. information on personell planning;
 - d. description of measures for gender equality;
 - e. description of measures for the promotion of early-career scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic talent at private university colleges;
 - f. measures establishing a quality management system.
2. The private university college shall define a regular process for monitoring the achievement of objectives and adapting the development plan.

(3) Organisation of the private university college

1. Pursuant to § 5 para. 1 PrivHG, the private university college's organisational structure ensures higher education autonomy and thus the freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination and teaching of the arts and their teaching. To this end, the private university college has a balanced system of academic self-administration (collegial body), governance (governing body) and strategic management (supervisory body), while taking into account the interests of the legal entity.
2. The corresponding organisational structure, the bodies and their competences as well as other regulations that serve to fulfil the tasks of the private university college are defined in the statute, a draft version of which shall be attached to the application for institutional accreditation. The statute shall define:
 - a. governing principles and tasks of the private university college as well as the relationship between the legal entity and the bodies of the private university college;
 - b. bodies of the private university college, in particular the governing body, collegial body and supervisory body;
 - c. regulations to ensure integrity of academic and artistic study, teaching and research activities as well as good academic and artistic practice in all areas;
 - d. equality of all genders, in particular through an equal opportunity plan;
 - e. ensuring that students have a say in academic matters;
 - f. provisions on degree programmes, in particular admission, selection and examination regulations at private university college and doctoral regulations at private universities;
 - g. if applicable, guidelines for the award of academic honours pursuant to § 8 para. 2 PrivHG;
 - h. guidelines for appointment procedures at private university colleges and for appointment and habilitation procedures at private universities.

3. Pursuant to § 5 para. 2 subpara. 2 PrivHG, the draft statutes describe the bodies, in particular the governing body, collegial body and supervisory body of the private university college. Their functions, their central responsibilities and the appointment procedures shall also be described in the draft statutes. The following shall be provided for, in particular:
 - a. The participation rights of academic self-administration are secured in regard to all academic issues. This includes, as a minimum, the contents of research and teaching as well as the participation in the appointment of the members of the private university college's bodies and in the selection and appointment procedures.
 - b. The composition of the body of academic self-administration ensures a balanced representation of all status groups required to fulfil the private university college's academic core tasks.
 - c. The governing bodies are appointed through an election that involves the academic self-administration.
 - d. The governing body and the collegial body may not include any person with an interest in the maintaining body (legal entity) or in a legal person holding an interest in the maintaining body.
 - e. The legal entity's interests are safeguarded but are limited by the fundamental freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination of the arts and their teaching.
4. The draft statute shall govern the appointment procedures for professorships in accordance with international standards which comprise:
 - a. a transparent, quality-driven and competitive design
 - b. the participation of the body of academic self-administration;
 - c. an appointment committee with professorial members from relevant subject areas; in the event that the private university college does not have a sufficient number of subject-related professorships in order to fill the seats, external members shall be appointed;
 - d. a guaranteed qualification of the members to be appointed equivalent to a habilitation in an appropriate subject area. A more detailed justification shall be provided in the application as to corresponding explanations with regard to qualifications equivalent to a habilitation. In any case, a relevant professorship or the nomination for a shortlist as part of an appointment procedure at a recognised Austrian or foreign higher education institution shall be regarded as proof of a qualification equivalent to a habilitation degree.
5. For private universities that offer habilitations, the habilitation procedure shall be regulated in the draft statute. It shall be ensured that:
 - a. the private university demonstrably has an established research environment in the subject area of the habilitation, in which a doctoral programme relevant to the subject is embedded;
 - b. the habilitation regulations define the basic framework conditions for a habilitation procedure;
 - c. the habilitation procedure ensures that qualification requirements appropriate to the university level are met for the granting of teaching authorisation.

(4) Quality management system

1. The private university college must provide for a quality management system that is embedded in the higher education institution's strategic management. The quality management system comprises processes and measures for:
 - a. regular and systematic collection of information and data in the areas of study, research and development and supporting tasks;
 - b. ensuring fulfilment of the criteria for the accreditation of u degree programmes through defined, regular evaluations with the involvement of relevant stakeholders;

- c. development of new and continuous further development of degree programmes with the involvement of relevant interest groups.
- 2. The private university college must provide appropriate and suitable structures and procedures to ensure that the rules of good scientific practice and scientific and/or artistic integrity are adhered to.

(5) Degree programme and degree programme management

Taking into account a heterogeneous student body, the following criteria shall apply. In the case of degree programmes with special profile elements, the descriptions shall address these characteristics defining the profile. Special profile elements are, for example, access to a regulated profession, mandatory vocational practice in the case of master's programmes, study formats alongside professional activity, dual degree programmes, degree programmes with distance learning components and fully online degree programmes, joint study programmes or jointly offered study programmes that are conducted at more than one location.

1. The degree programme is oriented towards the profile and strategic objectives of the private university college. If the qualifications to be acquired with the completion of the degree programme are prerequisites for access to a regulated profession,
 - a. the demand and acceptance of the degree programme is clearly demonstrated and the
 - b. evidence of recognition of the qualification to practise the profession shall be enclosed with the application.
2. The curriculum of the degree programme
 - a. corresponds to the scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic and didactic requirements of the respective subject area and/or the respective subject areas, and is related to the focal areas of research and development and appreciation of the arts at the private university college;
 - b. comprises defined core subject areas which reflect the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme;
 - c. ensures the achievement of the intended learning outcomes according to the respective qualification level of the National Qualifications Framework through content and structure;
 - d. comprises modules and/or courses with suitable learning/teaching methods that promote the active participation of students in the learning process and provide for suitable assessment methods to achieve the intended learning outcomes;
 - e. comprises modules and/or courses whose workload, expressed in ECTS credits, enables the degree programme to be completed within the specified duration of study.
3. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the thematic focus of the degree programme.
4. To support international mobility and to facilitate academic and professional recognition of the qualifications acquired, a programme-specific Diploma Supplement shall be provided for students and graduates. An exemplary Diploma Supplement for the degree programme shall be enclosed with the application for institutional accreditation.
5. The admission requirements for the degree programme and the admission procedure for the degree programme are clearly defined and communicated transparently. The organisation of the admission procedure ensures an objective selection of applicants.
6. Procedures for the recognition of examinations, other academic achievements and formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences, in the context of credit transfer for examinations or parts of the degree programme, are defined and transparent for all stakeholders.

(6) Counselling and support for students

1. The private university college provides for suitable offerings for counselling on the subjects and organisation of studies as well as psychosocial counselling and support for its students.
2. The private university college provides for a suitable procedure of handling complaints made by students.

(7) Research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts

For the first six years following initial institutional accreditation, the private university college must have a plan for implementing its research and development activities, which is consistent with the priorities set out in the development plan. The plan is attached to the application for institutional accreditation and includes:

1. statements on ensuring suitable organisational and structural framework conditions to promote research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts;
2. statements on ensuring scientific standards in the respective academic subject areas and disciplines where research and development or activities in the context of advancement and appreciation of the arts are planned;
3. statements on the planning and establishment of institutionally anchored co-operations on research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts with with partners from the higher education area and, where appropriate, from outside higher education in Austria and abroad;
4. statements on measures for knowledge and/or technology transfer to the economy and society.

The following shall apply to § 15 para. 7 subpara. 2: Private universities shall also explain how the international visibility of the planned research activities is guaranteed.

(8) Staff

1. In order to fulfil its tasks in accordance with the development plan, the private university college provides
 - a. sufficient permanent and adjunct scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff who are professionally and didactically qualified according to the requirements of the respective post, and
 - b. sufficient non-scientific staff.
2. The private university college ensures that the subject-specific core competences which reflect the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme are covered by
 - a. permanent professors corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent as well as
 - b. other permanent scientific and/or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent.
3. The private university college's permanent scientific or scientific-artistic staff is involved in the activities related to research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts in their specified subject.
4. The private university college has adequate processes to
 - a. integrate the adjunct teaching staff in the teaching and study organisation of degree programmes and
 - b. manage an appropriate balance between teaching, research, and administrative activities of the permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff.
5. The private university college provides for transparent and quality-driven recruitment procedures for hiring permanent and adjunct teaching and research staff, as well as adequate further training and staff development measures.

The following shall apply to § 15 para. 8 subpara. 1 to 4: The private university college shall ensure that at least 50 per cent of the relevant teaching capacity in the accredited degree programmes is covered by permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff. Permanent teaching and research staff are defined as those employed by the private university college for at least 50 percent of their full-time equivalent, typically corresponding to a minimum of 20 hours per week.

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, in particular degree programmes with a clinical focus (human medicine, private universities), clinical staff of the cooperating clinics (non-university legal entities) are considered permanent teaching and research staff of the private university college. The corresponding regulations must be laid down in the co-operation agreement between the private university college and the co-operating clinics (non-university legal entities). The contract must be enclosed with the application for institutional accreditation and published by the private university college on its website pursuant to § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets.

The following shall apply to § 15 para. 8 subpara. 1 and 2: The private university college shall submit curricula vitae for existing permanent teaching and research staff with the application for institutional accreditation. For this staff, the respective percentage of employment at the private university college and the teaching load must be documented. For permanent teaching and research staff who have yet to be recruited, a recruitment plan indicating the date of the planned appointment must be enclosed with the application for institutional accreditation.

The following shall apply to § 15 para. 8 subpara. 2: The private university college shall enclose with the application for institutional accreditation an overview of the respective core subject areas of the degree programmes, naming the respective permanent professors, supplemented by information on other permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff.

(9) Funding

A financial plan for the first six years following accreditation shall be enclosed with the application for institutional accreditation. The financial plan refers to the explanations in the development plan and includes a realistic and plausible comparison of all expected income and expenses in connection with the establishment of a private university college. The financial plan must address the following aspects in a calculably comprehensible and plausible manner:

1. presentation of a minimum number of students that ensures that the respective degree programmes are sustainable for the duration of the accreditation;
2. presentation of all costs in relation to the necessary infrastructure and planned staff requirements (scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic and non-scientific staff);
3. presentation of precautionary measures, in particular through the creation of reserves, which ensure the continuation of studies in the event that degree programmes are discontinued.

The application for institutional accreditation shall be accompanied by the corresponding funding commitments from the funding bodies named in the financial plan. The financial calculations must be attached to the application for institutional accreditation in Excel format.

(10) Infrastructure

The private university college's facilities and equipment are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate to ensure the performance of its tasks in accordance with the development plan. In the case that the private university college draws on external resources, their right of disposal has been secured and the key points thereof shall be described in the application for initial institutional accreditation.

(11) Co-operations

In addition to the planning of institutionally anchored co-operations in research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts pursuant to 15 para. 7 subpara. 3, the private university college enters into co-operations with partners from the higher education area and, where appropriate, from outside higher education in Austria and abroad, which align with its profile and aim to promote the mobility of students and staff.

(12) Information

The private university college has a website that offers easily accessible and up-to-date information about its services, including, as a minimum, the statutes, the curricula with the study and examination regulations, model written study contracts agreements and an outline of the quality management system.

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, the co-operation agreement with the non-university legal entity (e.g. co-operating clinic) must be published in accordance with § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets. Particular attention shall be given to ensuring that these contracts include provisions regarding the services to be provided by the co-operating institutions, the implementation of the degree programme, and the financing arrangements.

§ 16. Criteria for the extension of institutional accreditation

The following criteria shall apply for the extension of institutional accreditation of private university colleges. If, in the course of the extension of the institutional accreditation of a private university college, an application for accreditation as a private university is submitted, this application shall contain an application for accreditation of at least one doctoral programme. The criteria pursuant to § 18 of this decree shall apply to the accreditation of the doctoral programme.

(1) Profile and objectives

The private university college has defined an institutional profile and derives objectives for its activities, while ensuring that the following key principles are adhered to:

1. the freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination of the arts and their teaching;
2. the connection of research and teaching;
3. the diversity of scientific and artistic theories, methods, and doctrines.

(2) Development plan

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college provides a comprehensible and plausible explanation of focal points of the development plan were implemented during the previous accreditation period and which changes and adjustments were made. In addition, the private university college describes how, on the basis of an established procedure, a regular process of monitoring the achievement of objectives has taken place.
2. The application for extension of institutional accreditation is accompanied by an updated development plan for the next six-year accreditation period of the private university college, which is consistent with the profile and objectives and which specifies longer-term goals and strategies for achieving them. The development plan describes how the objectives set for this period can be achieved with the planned measures and the allocated resources and includes:
 - a. designation of focal points and measures in teaching and research and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts;
 - b. information on structural and content-related development planning;
 - c. information on staff planning;
 - d. description of measures for gender equality;
 - e. measures for the further development of the quality management system.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 2 subpara. 2: After an uninterrupted accreditation period of twelve years, a private university college may apply for extension of the institutional accreditation for a period of six to twelve years. The application shall set forth the requested period of extension and the development plan for the entire period applied for is comprehensible and plausibly justified.

(3) Organisation of the private university college

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college provides a comprehensible explanation of which changes and adjustments were made to the statutes in the previous accreditation period and which processes and measures are used to ensure that the autonomy of the higher education institution and thus the freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination of the arts and its teaching is guaranteed while at the same time taking into account the interests of the legal entity. The corresponding organisational structure pursuant to § 5 para. 1 PrivHG ensures a balanced interaction between the bodies of academic self-administration, management and strategic control defined in the statutes. The statutes are enclosed with the application for extension of institutional accreditation.
2. In the statute the following issues as defined in § 5 para. 2 PrivHG, are specified in a comprehensible and adequate manner:
 - a. governing principles and tasks of the private university as well as the relationship between the legal entity and the bodies of the private university college;
 - b. bodies of the private university college, in particular the governing body, collegial body and supervisory body;
 - c. regulations to ensure integrity of academic and artistic study, teaching and research activities as well as good academic and artistic practice in all areas;
 - d. equality of all genders, in particular through an equal opportunity plan;
 - e. ensuring that students have a say in academic matters;
 - f. provisions on degree programmes, in particular admission, selection and examination regulations at private university college and doctoral regulations at private universities;
 - g. if applicable, guidelines for the award of academic honours pursuant to § 8 para. 2 PrivHG;
 - h. guidelines for appointment procedures at private university colleges and for appointment and habilitation procedures at private universities.
3. Pursuant to § 5 para. 2 PrivHG, the statute describes the bodies' functions, their central responsibilities and the appointment procedures. The following shall be provided for, in particular:
 - a. The participation rights of academic self-administration are secured in regard to all academic issues. This includes, as a minimum, the contents of research and teaching as well as the participation in the appointment of the members of the private university college's bodies and in the selection and appointment procedures.
 - b. The composition of the body of academic self-administration (collegial body) ensures a balanced representation of all status groups required to fulfil the private university college's academic core tasks.
 - c. The governing bodies are appointed through an election that involves the academic self-administration.
 - d. The governing body and the collegial body may not include any person with an interest in the maintaining body (legal entity) or in a legal person holding an interest in the maintaining body.
 - e. The legal entity's interests are safeguarded but are limited by the fundamental freedom of science and its teaching and/or the freedom of artistic activity and the dissemination of the arts and their teaching.
4. The statute shall govern the appointment procedures for professorships in accordance with international standards which comprise:

- a. a transparent, quality-driven and competitive design
 - b. the participation of the body of academic self-administration (collegial body);
 - c. an appointment committee with professorial members from relevant subject areas; in the event that the private university college does not have a sufficient number of subject-related professorships in order to fill the seats, external members shall be appointed;
 - d. a guaranteed qualification of the members to be appointed equivalent to a habilitation in an appropriate subject area. A more detailed justification shall be provided in the application as to corresponding explanations with regard to qualifications equivalent to a habilitation. In any case, a relevant professorship or the nomination for a shortlist as part of an appointment procedure at a recognised Austrian or foreign higher education institution shall be regarded as proof of a qualification equivalent to a habilitation degree.
5. For private universities that offer habilitations, the habilitation procedure shall be regulated in the statute. It shall be ensured that:
- a. the private university demonstrably has an established research environment in the subject area of the habilitation, in which a doctoral programme relevant to the subject is embedded;
 - b. the habilitation regulations define the basic framework conditions for a habilitation procedure;
 - c. the habilitation procedure ensures that qualification requirements appropriate to the university level are met for the granting of teaching authorisation.

(4) Quality management system

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college shall describe the processes and measures with which the effectiveness of the quality management system and the defined instruments are regularly assessed and, if necessary, further developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. The private university college describes the key results of these processes in its application.
2. Based on its objectives, the private university college shall explain how the established quality management system, which is integrated into the strategic university management, will ensure the regular assessment of the quality of teaching and learning as well as research and development and the supporting tasks in the upcoming accreditation period. The quality management system comprises processes and measures for
 - a. regular and systematic collection of information and data in the areas of study, teaching and research and development and the supporting tasks;
 - b. ensuring compliance with the criteria for the accreditation of study programmes through defined regular evaluations with the involvement of relevant stakeholders;
 - c. developing new degree programmes and continuous further development of existing programmes with the involvement of the relevant internal and external stakeholders.
3. The private university college ensures compliance with the rules of good scientific practice and scientific and/or artistic integrity through appropriate and suitable structures and procedures.

(5) Counselling and support for students

1. The private university college provides adequate support offerings on the subjects and relating to the study formats as well as psychosocial counselling and support for its students.
2. The private university college provides for a suitable procedure of handling complaints made by students.

(6) Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college shall explain which strategic objectives and priorities for research and development activities or for the advancement and appreciation of the arts were implemented in the previous accreditation period and which were not implemented, providing comprehensible and plausible reasons.
2. The private university college has defined a plan for the upcoming six-year accreditation period for the implementation of research and development work or activities in the area of advancement and appreciation of the arts, which is consistent with the development plan. The plan includes
 - a. statements on organisational and structural framework conditions for the promotion of research and development activities and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts;
 - b. statements on ensuring scientific standards in the respective academic disciplines in which the planned achievements of research and development activities or the advancement and appreciation of the arts are outlined;
 - c. statements on institutionally anchored co-operations in research and development and/or for the advancement and appreciation of the arts with higher education institutions and, with partners from the higher education area and, where appropriate, from outside higher education in Austria and abroad;
 - d. statements on measures for knowledge and/or technology transfer to the economy and society.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 6 subpara. 2 lit. b: Private universities shall also explain how the international visibility of the planned research achievements is guaranteed.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 6 subpara. 2: After an uninterrupted accreditation period of twelve years, extension of the institutional accreditation for a period of six to twelve years may be applied for. The application shall set forth the requested period of extension and the development plan for the entire period applied for is comprehensible and plausibly justified.

(7) Staff

1. For carrying out its tasks in accordance with the development plan, the private university college provides at all sites at which studies are offered for
 - a. sufficient scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff who are didactically and professionally qualified in accordance with the requirements of the respective post; and
 - b. sufficient non-scientific staff.
2. The private university college ensures that the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme are covered by
 - a. permanent professors corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent as well as
 - b. other permanent scientific and/or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent.
3. The private university college's permanent scientific or scientific-artistic staff is involved in the activities related to research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts in their specified subject.
4. The private university college has adequate processes to
 - a. integrate the adjunct teaching staff in teaching and study organisation of the degree programmes and
 - b. manage an appropriate balance between teaching, research, and administrative activities of the permanent scientific and/or scientific or scientific-artistic staff.

5. The private university college provides for transparent and quality-driven recruitment procedures for hiring permanent and adjunct teaching and research staff, as well as adequate further training and staff development measures.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 7 subpara. 1 and 2: The private university college shall ensure that at least 50 percent of the relevant teaching capacity in the accredited degree programmes is covered by permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff. Permanent teaching and research staff are defined as persons who are employed at the private university college for at least 50 percent of their time (usually at least 20 hours per week).

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, in particular degree programmes with a clinical focus (human medicine, private universities), clinical staff of the cooperating clinics (non-university legal entities) are considered permanent teaching and research staff of the private university college. The corresponding regulations must be laid down in the co-operation agreement between the private university college and the co-operating clinics (non-university legal entities). The contract must be enclosed with the application for extension of institutional accreditation and published by the private university college on its website pursuant to § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 7 subpara. 1 and 2: The private university college shall submit CVs of the permanent teaching and research staff with the application for extension of institutional accreditation. For this staff, the respective percentage of employment at the private university college and the teaching load must be documented.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 7 subpara. 2: The application for extension of institutional accreditation must be accompanied by an overview of the degree programmes accredited at the time of submission of the application for extension of institutional accreditation. The overview shall include the respective core subject areas of these degree programmes, naming the respective permanent professors, supplemented by information on other permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff.

(8) Funding

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college explains any deviations in the financial planning compared to the previous accreditation and provides a calculably comprehensible and plausible justification for the measures taken to achieve or amend the objectives outlined in the development plan
2. The application for extension of institutional accreditation is accompanied by a financial plan for the upcoming six-year accreditation period of the private university college, which refers to the explanations in the development plan and includes a realistic and plausible comparison of all expected income and expenses in connection with the upcoming accreditation period of the private university college. The financial plan must address the following aspects in a calculably comprehensible and plausible manner:
 - a. presentation of a minimum number of students that ensures that the respective degree programmes are sustainable for the duration of the accreditation;
 - b. presentation of all costs in relation to the necessary infrastructure and staff requirements (scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic and non-scientific staff);
 - c. presentation of precautionary measures, in particular through the creation of reserves, which ensure the continuation of studies in the event that degree programmes are discontinued.

Funding commitments from all funding bodies listed in the financial plan as well as financial calculations in Excel format shall be attached to the application for extension of institutional accreditation.

The following shall apply to § 16 para. 8 subpara. 2: After an uninterrupted accreditation period of twelve years, extension of the institutional accreditation for a period of six to twelve years may be applied for. The application shall set forth the requested period of extension and the development plan for the entire period applied for is comprehensible and plausibly justified.

(9) Infrastructure

The private university college's facilities and equipment are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate to ensure the performance of its tasks in accordance with the development plan. In the case that the private university college draws on external resources, their right of disposal has been secured and the key points thereof shall be described in the application for extension of institutional accreditation.

(10) Co-operation

1. In the application for extension of institutional accreditation, the private university college shall describe which higher education and non-higher education partnerships both domestically and internationally were established, further developed or terminated during the previous accreditation period in addition to the institutionally anchored cooperation in research and development pursuant to § 16 para. 6 subpara. 2 lit. b. Furthermore, the private university college outlines the measures taken to subject existing partnerships to regular quality assurance. The key results of these measures are presented in the application for extension of institutional accreditation.
2. The application for extension of institutional accreditation is accompanied by a plan for the upcoming six-year accreditation period of the private university college, which outlines cooperation initiatives to promote the mobility of students and staff.

(11) Information

The private university college has a website that offers easily accessible and up-to-date information about its services, including, as a minimum, the statutes, the curricula with the study and examination regulations, model written study contracts agreements and an outline of the quality management system.

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, the co-operation agreement with the non-university legal entity (e.g. cooperating clinic) must be published pursuant to § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets. Particular attention shall be given to ensuring that these contracts include provisions regarding the services to be provided by the co-operating institutions, the implementation of the degree programme, and the financing arrangements.

§ 17. Criteria for the accreditation of degree programmes

The following criteria shall apply to the accreditation of degree programmes:

(1) Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

1. The degree programme, which is linked to the educational institution's profile and strategic objectives, was developed using a predefined procedure for the systematic development and establishment of degree programmes involving the relevant stakeholders.
2. Following accreditation, the degree programme is incorporated into the private university college's quality management system. Using an established process for quality assurance and enhancement and including the relevant stakeholders, the private university college ensures ongoing compliance with the accreditation criteria.
3. The private university college ensures that the degree programme is integrated into appropriate and suitable structures and procedures to ensure compliance with the rules of good academic practice and academic and/or artistic integrity.

The following shall apply to § 17 para. 1 subpara. 1 and 2: These assessment criteria shall not apply to private university colleges if their institutional accreditation has already been renewed twice.

(2) Degree programme and degree programme management

Taking into account a heterogeneous student body, the following criteria shall apply. In the case of degree programmes with special profile elements, the descriptions shall address these characteristics defining the profile. Special

profile elements are, for example, access to a regulated profession, mandatory vocational practice in the case of master's programmes, study formats alongside professional activity, dual degree programmes, degree programmes with distance learning components and fully online degree programmes, joint study programmes or jointly offered study programmes that are conducted at more than one location.

1. The degree programme is oriented towards the profile and strategic objectives of the private university college. If the qualifications to be acquired with the completion of the degree programme are prerequisites for access to a regulated profession,
 - a. the demand and acceptance of the degree programme is clearly demonstrated and the
 - b. evidence of recognition of the qualification to practise the profession shall be enclosed with the application.
2. The curriculum of the degree programme
 - a. corresponds to the scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic and didactic requirements of the respective subject area and/or the respective subject areas, and is related to the focal areas of research and development and appreciation of the arts at the private university college;
 - b. comprises defined core subject areas which reflect the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme;
 - c. ensures the achievement of the intended learning outcomes according to the respective qualification level of the National Qualifications Framework through content and structure;
 - d. comprises modules and/or courses with suitable learning/teaching methods that promote the active participation of students in the learning process and provide for suitable assessment methods to achieve the intended learning outcomes;
 - e. comprises modules and/or courses whose workload, expressed in ECTS credits, enables the degree programme to be completed within the specified duration of study.
3. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the thematic focus of the degree programme.
4. To support international mobility and to facilitate academic and professional recognition of the qualifications acquired, a programme-specific Diploma Supplement shall be provided for students and graduates. An exemplary Diploma Supplement for the degree programme shall be enclosed with the application for accreditation.
5. The admission requirements for the degree programme and the admission procedure for the degree programme are clearly defined and communicated transparently. The organisation of the admission procedure ensures an objective selection of applicants.
6. Procedures for the recognition of examinations, other academic achievements and formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences, in the context of credit transfer for examinations or parts of the degree programme, are defined and transparent for all stakeholders.

(3) Research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts

The permanent teaching and research staff assigned to the degree programme are involved in the research and development activities relevant to the degree programme or in the development of the arts that meet the scientific and/or artistic standards of the respective subject area(s).

(4) Staff

1. At all locations where the degree programme is offered, sufficient permanent and adjunct scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff who are professionally and didactically qualified according to the requirements of the respective post, shall be available.

2. The core subject areas, which represent the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme, are covered by
 - a. permanent professors corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent as well as
 - b. other permanent scientific and/or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent.
3. The private university college has adequate processes to
 - a. integrate the adjunct teaching staff in the teaching and study organisation of degree programmes and
 - b. manage an appropriate balance between teaching, research, and administrative activities of the permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff.
4. The private university college ensures that the composition of permanent and adjunct teaching and research staff is appropriate to the profile of the degree programme.

The following shall apply to § 17 para. 4 subpara. 1 and 4: The private university college shall ensure that at least 50 percent of the relevant teaching capacity in the degree programme is covered by permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff. Permanent teaching and research staff are defined as those employed by the private university college for at least 50 percent of their full-time equivalent, typically corresponding to a minimum of 20 hours per week.

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, in particular degree programmes with a clinical focus (human medicine, private universities), clinical staff of the cooperating clinics (non-university legal entities) are considered permanent teaching and research staff of the private university college. The corresponding regulations must be laid down in the co-operation agreement between the private university college and the co-operating clinics (non-university legal entities).

The following shall apply to § 17 para. 4 subpara. 1 and 4: The private university college shall submit curricula vitae for existing permanent teaching and research staff with the application for programme accreditation. Evidence of the respective extent of employment and teaching load must be provided for this staff. For this staff, the respective percentage of employment at the private university college and the teaching load must be documented. For permanent teaching and research staff who have yet to be recruited, a recruitment plan indicating the date of the planned appointment must be enclosed with the application for programme accreditation.

(5) Funding

A financial plan for the first six years following accreditation, outlining costs per study place, shall include

1. a realistic, calculably plausible comparison of all expected income and expenses related to the implementation of the degree programme, and
2. precautionary measures which ensure the continuation of studies in the event that the degree programme is discontinued.

The application for accreditation of degree programmes shall be accompanied by the corresponding funding commitments from the funding bodies named in the financial plan. The financial calculations shall be attached to the application in Excel format.

(6) Infrastructure

The required facilities and equipment are available for the degree programme. In the case that external resources are required for the degree programme, their right of disposal has been secured and the key points thereof shall be described in the application for programme accreditation.

(7) Co-operation

If co-operation projects with other higher education institutions and, where appropriate, partnerships with institutions outside the higher education area in Austria and abroad are planned to promote the mobility of students and staff of the programme in accordance with the profile, the key points of the intended co-operation projects must be outlined in the application for programme accreditation.

If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, in particular degree programmes with a clinical orientation (human medicine, private universities), the corresponding regulations must be laid down in a co-operation agreement between the private university college and the co-operating clinics (non-university legal entities). Particular attention shall be given to ensuring that these contracts include provisions regarding the services to be provided by the co-operating institutions, the implementation of the degree programme, and the financing arrangements. The contract must be enclosed with the application for programme accreditation and published by the private university college on its website pursuant to § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets.

§ 18. Criteria for the accreditation of doctoral programmes

The accreditation of doctoral programmes is possible only for private university colleges that fulfil the accreditation requirements pursuant to § 4 PrivHG. Moreover, the accreditation of doctoral programmes is possible for private university colleges where pursuant to § 4 para. 4 PrivHG the requirements for the accreditation as a private university are already met at the time of institutional initial accreditation. The following criteria shall apply to the accreditation of doctoral degree programmes:

(1) Development and quality assurance of the doctoral programme

1. The degree programme was developed using a predefined procedure for the development and establishment of degree programmes and involving the relevant stakeholder groups.
2. Following its accreditation, the degree programme is incorporated into the private university's quality management system. Using an established process for quality assurance and enhancement and involving the relevant stakeholder groups, the private university ensures ongoing compliance with the accreditation criteria.
3. The private university ensures that the degree programme is incorporated into appropriate and suitable structures and procedures to ensure compliance with the rules of good scientific practice and scientific and artistic integrity.

The following shall apply to § 18 para. 1 subpara. 1 and 2: These assessment criteria shall not apply to private university colleges if their institutional accreditation has already been renewed twice.

(2) Research environment

1. According to its profile and objectives, the private university has developed a research concept
 - a. in which the doctoral programme is embedded and
 - b. which defines research priorities in the discipline of the doctoral programme.
2. The private university can prove that the research priorities and research activities defined for the doctoral programme are in accordance with the academic standards and the respective discipline's standards and guarantee international visibility.
3. Institutionally anchored co-operation projects in research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts which are relevant for the doctoral programme and appropriate for the respective discipline have been provided for.
4. The private university promotes research and development activities by providing for suitable organisational and structural framework and ensures that the doctoral programme has been adequately incorporated. The private

university ensures for an appropriate balance of the teaching, research, and administrative activities of the permanent scientific or scientific-artistic staff, respectively, providing for sufficient time for research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as the supervision of doctoral students.

5. The private university's research infrastructure as well as its facilities and equipment are adequate on a quantitative and a qualitative basis for operating the doctoral programme. In the case that the private university draws on external resources, their right of disposal has been secured and the key points thereof shall be described in the application for accreditation of the doctoral programme.

(3) Supervision and counselling services

1. The private university concludes agreements with the doctoral students which govern the respective rights and duties of the private university, the doctoral students and their supervisors. A template of the agreement shall be attached to the application for accreditation of the doctoral programme.
2. If the private university allows for team supervision of doctoral thesis projects, an adequate supervision concept, including the requirements of all supervisors, shall be outlined.
3. With regard to the supervision of doctoral thesis projects and adequate for the respective discipline, the private university provides for an appropriate number of doctoral students per supervisor. In the case of team supervision, the number of doctoral students shall relate to the main supervisor.
4. The private university enables the doctoral students to engage in an intensive dialogue with scientists and/or artists by co-operating with higher education institutions and, if applicable, partners outside the higher education area in Austria and abroad, and promotes the doctoral students' participation in national and international symposia.
5. The private university provides the doctoral students with appropriate counselling services which are tailored to the specific degree programme.

(4) Degree programme and degree programme management

Taking into account a heterogeneous student body, the following criteria shall apply. In the case of doctoral programmes with special profile elements, the descriptions shall furthermore address these characteristics defining the profile. Special profile elements in doctoral programmes may include, for example, distance-learning degree programmes or joint degree programmes.F

1. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the degree programme's profile.
2. The curriculum is based on
 - a. a minimum duration of three years;
 - b. The curriculum ensures by its content and structure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, while connecting research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts and teaching in accordance with the respective qualifications level of the National Qualifications Framework;
 - c. The content and structure of the curriculum ensure that the workload associated with the doctoral programme, expressed in ECTS credits, enables to achieve the intended learning outcomes, and especially preparing a doctoral thesis, within the specified duration of study;
 - d. In addition, the defined examination methods are suitable to assess whether and to what extent the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.
3. The application for accreditation of the doctoral degree programme is accompanied by regulations for doctoral programmes, which regulate the essential provisions for the implementation of the doctoral programme.

4. The requirements for admission and the admission procedure for the doctoral programme have been clearly defined and communicated transparently. The structure of the admission procedure ensures a fair selection of applicants.
5. Procedures for the recognition of formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences, in the context of credit transfer for examinations or parts of the degree programme, are clearly defined and transparent for all those involved.

(5) Staff

1. At all locations where the doctoral programme is offered, the private university has employed a sufficient number of permanent professors in the discipline relevant for the doctoral programme who cover the whole range of the discipline's content and methods in order to adequately supervise doctoral thesis projects.
2. The private university has sufficient scientific or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff, respectively, that is appropriately qualified for the teaching and research activities provided for in the degree programme and that is actively involved in the activities related to research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts in their specified subject. The persons provided for the supervision of doctoral thesis projects
 - a. are authorised to teach (*venia docendi*) or have an equivalent qualification in the respective scientific and/or scientific-artistic discipline;
 - b. for the most part, have experience in supervising doctoral thesis projects.
3. The private university provides personnel development measures for supervisors that are aimed at the supervision of doctoral students.

The following shall apply to § 18 para. 5 subpara. 2: In the case of team supervision, the requirements pursuant to para. 5 subpara. 2 lit. a to b shall apply for the main supervisor .

(6) Funding

The financial plan for the degree programme for the upcoming six-year accreditation period, outlining costs per study place, shall include

- a. a realistic, calculably plausible comparison of all expected income and expenses related to the implementation of the degree programme, and
- b. precautionary measures which ensure the continuation of studies in the event that the degree programme is discontinued.

The application for accreditation of the doctoral programme shall be accompanied by the corresponding funding commitments from the funding bodies named in the financial plan. The financial calculations shall be attached to the application in Excel format.

§ 19. Criteria for the extension of programme accreditation for degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG

The following criteria shall apply for the extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG:

(1) Degree programme and degree programme management

1. The curriculum of the degree programme

- a. meets the scientific and didactic requirements of the subject area, taking into account the integration of research and teaching;
- b. comprises defined core subject areas which reflect the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme;
- c. ensures the achievement of the intended learning outcomes according to the respective qualification level of the National Qualifications Framework through content and structure;
- d. comprises modules and/or courses with suitable learning/teaching and examination methods to achieve the intended learning outcomes, which are linked to the overall concept of the degree programme;
- e. comprises modules and/or courses whose workload, expressed in ECTS credits, enables the degree programme to be completed within the specified duration of study.

2. The admission requirements for the degree programme and the admission procedure for the degree programme are clearly defined and communicated transparently. The organisation of the admission procedure ensures an objective selection of applicants.

3. Procedures for the recognition of formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences, in the context of credit transfer for examinations or parts of the degree programme, are clearly defined and transparent for all those involved.

(2) Staff

1. For carrying out its tasks related to teaching and research for the degree programme, the private university college provides for sufficient permanent and adjunct scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff who are professionally and didactically qualified according to the requirements of the respective post.

2. The core subject areas, which represent the main subjects of the degree programme and thus the central competences to be acquired in the degree programme, are covered by

- a. permanent professors corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent as well as
- b. other permanent scientific and/or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff corresponding to at least one full-time equivalent.

The following shall apply to § 19 para. 2 subpara. 1 and 2: The private university college shall ensure that at least 50 percent of the relevant teaching capacity in the degree programme is covered by permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff. Permanent teaching and research staff are defined as persons who are employed at the private university college for at least 50 percent of their time (usually at least 20 hours per week).

The following shall apply to § 19 para. 2 subpara. 1 and 2: The private university college shall enclose curricula vitae for existing permanent teaching and research staff with the application for extension of the programme accreditation. Evidence of the respective extent of employment and teaching load must be provided for this staff.

The following shall apply to § 19 para. 2 subpara. 1 and 2: In the case of degree programmes with a clinical focus (hu-

man medicine, private universities), clinical staff of the co-operating clinics (non-university legal entities) are considered permanent teaching and research staff of the private university college. The corresponding regulations must be laid down in the co-operation agreement between the private university college and the cooperating clinics (non-university legal entities).

The following shall apply to § 19 para. 2: The application for extension of programme accreditation must be accompanied by an overview of the core subject areas of the degree programme. The overview shall include the core subject areas of the degree programme, naming the respective permanent professors who cover these core subject areas, supplemented by information on other permanent scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic teaching and research staff.

(3) Quality management system

1. In the application for extension of programme accreditation, the private university college shall describe the processes and measures with which the effectiveness of the quality management system and the defined instruments are regularly assessed and, if necessary, further developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. The private university college describes the key results of these processes in its application for extension of programme accreditation.
2. Based on its objectives, the private university college shall explain how the established quality management system, which is integrated into the strategic university management, will ensure the regular assessment of the quality of teaching and learning as well as research and development and the supporting tasks in the upcoming six-year accreditation period of the degree programme. In particular, the specific requirements for the implementation of degree programmes that enable the acquisition of qualifications that are a prerequisite for access to a regulated profession must be addressed.
3. The private university college ensures compliance with the rules of good scientific practice and scientific and artistic integrity through appropriate and suitable structures and procedures.

(4) Funding

The application for extension of the programme accreditation must be accompanied by a financial plan which refers to the financial plan of the previous accreditation period of the degree programme and includes a realistic and plausible comparison of all expected income and expenses in the upcoming six-year accreditation period. The financial plan must address the following aspects in a calculably comprehensible and plausible manner:

1. presentation of a minimum number of students that ensures that the respective degree programmes are sustainable for the duration of the accreditation;
2. presentation of all costs in relation to the necessary infrastructure and staff requirements (scientific and/or artistic or scientific-artistic and non-scientific staff);
3. presentation of precautionary measures, in particular through the creation of reserves, which ensure the continuation of studies in the event that degree programmes are discontinued.

Funding commitments from all funding bodies listed in the financial plan as well as financial calculations in Excel format shall be attached to the application for extension of programme accreditation of degree programmes.

(5) Research and development

1. In the application for extension of the programme accreditation, the private university college shall explain which strategic objectives and priorities for research and development activities were implemented in the previous accreditation period, based on the information provided in the application for programme accreditation.
2. In the application for extension of programme accreditation, the private university college submits an updated plan for research and development activities or the advancement and appreciation of the arts for the upcoming six-year accreditation period. The plan includes

- a. statements on intended research and development activities in the core subject areas of the degree programme, which correspond to university requirements and the respective discipline and ensure international visibility;
 - b. statements on organisational and structural framework as well as on an adequate quantitative and qualitative research infrastructure that contributes to the implementation of university research.
3. If co-operation with a non-academic legal entity (e.g. co-operating clinic) is required for the implementation of research and development activities, the relevant specifications must be included in the application for extension of the programme accreditation.

(6) Infrastructure

The private university college's facilities and equipment are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate for operating the degree programme. If co-operation with a non-university legal entity (e.g. a co-operating clinic) is required for implementing the degree programme, the application for extension of programme accreditation shall include provisions regarding the services in connection with facilities and infrastructure requirements.

(7) Co-operation

1. In the application for extension of the programme accreditation, the private university college outlines which higher education and non-university partnerships in Austria and abroad were established, further developed or terminated in the previous accreditation period, in addition to institutionally anchored co-operations in connection with research and development activities, and which projects are planned for the upcoming six-year accreditation period.
2. In the application for extension of programme accreditation, the private university college describes the processes and measures with which existing co-operations were subjected to regular quality assurance. Key results of these measures are presented in the application for extension of programme accreditation.
3. If the private university college offers degree programmes pursuant to § 24 para. 4a HS-QSG, the co-operation agreement with the non-university legal entity (e.g. co-operating clinic) must be published in accordance with § 8 para. 6 PrivHG without reference to individuals and in compliance with company and business secrets. Particular attention shall be given to ensuring that these contracts include provisions regarding the services to be provided by the co-operating institutions, the implementation of the degree programme, and the financing arrangements.

§ 20. Criteria for the accreditation of joint study programmes and jointly offered study programmes

In addition to the criteria pursuant to §§ 17 or 18, the following criteria shall apply to the accreditation of joint study programmes and jointly offered study programmes:

- (1)** The partner institutions are recognised post-secondary educational institutions. Supporting evidence has been attached to the application.
- (2)** The institutions involved have concluded a co-operation agreement which has been attached to the application for programme accreditation and defines at least the following :
 1. academic performance to be rendered by the students at the respective institutions;
 2. admission and selection procedures;
 3. determination of the applicable study and examination regulation(s);
 4. automatic and full recognition of examinations and scientific theses produced at the institutions involved;

5. academic degree and specification of how and by whom the academic degree will be awarded;
6. organisational and administrative responsibilities.

§ 21. Criteria for the accreditation of degree programmes to be offered at another site as the institutionally accredited site of the private university college

For the accreditation of a degree programme offered at another site as the site of institutional accreditation, in addition to the criteria set out in §§ 17 or 18, the following criteria shall apply:

- (1)** The private university college ensures that the degree programme is offered in the same quality and under comparable study conditions as the degree programme offered at the institutionally accredited site, and in particular that:
 1. it will not lead to a lack of resources and, subsequently, a deterioration in quality at existing sites at which the degree programme is offered;
 2. a sufficient number of qualified teaching and research staff is available to offer the degree programme at another site;
 3. the specific challenges related to offering the degree programme are explicitly taken account for in the internal quality management system;
 4. the counselling and support services for students are adequate and comparable to those offered at the institutionally accredited site of the private university college, and
 5. a procedure to lodge complaints is available to the students.
- (2)** If the site offering the degree programme is located abroad, the private university college shall furthermore ensure that the respective national legislation is observed. In addition, the private university college shall ensure that
 1. the partner institution is a recognised post-secondary educational institution that is authorised to offer a degree programme in cooperation with a foreign educational institution;
 2. the cooperation is subjected to regular review regarding the established and targeted objectives;
 3. other educational traditions and cultural differences regarding teaching and learning, including examinations, are respected,
 4. in particular with regard to the students' role in the teaching and learning process as well as in the quality assurance processes.

5. Chapter: Entry into force

§ 22. Entry into force

- (1)** This decree enters into force on 15 January 2025.
- (2)** The decree does not apply to procedures that are pending as of 1 July 2024.

Disclaimer:

This translation is for informational purposes only and does not constitute the legally binding version of the document. In case of discrepancies, the original German text shall prevail.

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