



Agency for  
Quality Assurance  
and Accreditation  
Austria

# Annual Report 2012

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# Foreword

In July 2011, the National Assembly of the Republic of Austria realigned the legal quality assurance framework for external quality assurance and accreditation in Austria. One part of this realignment is the consolidation of the three previous Austrian quality assurance agencies the University of Applied Sciences Council (FHR) for the Universities of Applied Sciences, the Austrian Accreditation Council (ÖAR) for private universities, and the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency ((AQA) for the entire tertiary sector) to form the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria (AQ Austria) through the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG, 01.03.2012).

The objective of the reform is to create a common reference framework, which contributes to strengthening mutual trust and mutual recognition between the three higher education institution sectors. With the further development of the framework conditions of external quality assurance, it is also intended to contribute to improving the permeability of the higher education system. There has been a consolidation of the former fields of activity with initially minor adjustments in the approach for the purpose of a greater level of standardisation. The legally defined range of tasks that AQ Austria is very broad when compared internationally. AQ Austria is an agency that is independent from the universities and from government departments.

AQ Austria is now submitting its first annual report, which comprises the reporting period from its establishment on the 01.03.2012, to the end of 2012. Many corners have been turned in the first year. All the quality assurance processes have been adapted to the new legal framework conditions, contingent upon the requirement of aligning the quality assurance standards across sectors, as well as integrating the European and international standards, without neglecting the specific features of the types of higher education institutions. All of the stakeholders have been broadly involved by a consultation process.

AQ Austria is able to build upon the many international activities performed by all three predecessors. It is also of great importance to the board that the agency receives international recognition. In particular, the Austrian audit approach developed within an international network and observed internationally must be further developed. Internationally renowned experts are represented in the agency's board, and international specialists are also employed in the processes. The board has been able to attract Dr Achim Hopbach, President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and former Managing director of the German Accreditation Council, to be the Managing Director of the agency. The agency is a full member of ENQA. Accreditation with the German Accreditation Council and acceptance into the European Register for Quality Assurance (EQAR) have been initiated.

Austria now has a very advanced quality assurance system, which focuses on the development and support of universities on the path to increased quality. This means both opportunity and an obligation. An opportunity to have a profile that distinguishes the Austrian system from other systems, and is able to become a good practice example. An obligation to consistently further develop the system in order to support not only the development of the Austrian university system, but also to be viewed as an international standard.

The agency has had a productive and successful year, which was dedicated to the development of processes and the setting up of the agency. It has also proved simultaneously possible to conduct processes properly and satisfactorily. For this, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the employees who have enabled the successful consolidation of the agencies through their outstanding efforts.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Anke Hanft (President of AQ Austria)

# 1 An overview of AQ Austria

As AQ Austria is presenting its first annual report, it is intended that the agency will at this point put forward its position in terms of its principles, responsibilities, structure and activities in greater detail. There will be different focal points in terms of the content of future annual reports.

## 1.1 Legal foundations

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria has been set up by the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG<sup>1</sup>) as a corporate body under public law. The HS-QSG stipulates the organisation of AQ Austria as well as the principles and procedural cornerstones of quality assurance procedures. As AQ Austria has become active as an authority in the framework of the accreditation of private universities and universities of applied sciences, and their programmes, it is also committed to the General Administrative Procedures Act (AVG<sup>2</sup>).

At the same time as the HS-QSG, a new legal basis has been created for private universities in the form of the Private University Act (PUG<sup>3</sup>), and the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG<sup>4</sup>) has been revised. Both laws stipulate accreditation requirements for the respective type of university and their programmes, as well as some organisation-based legal aspects. In contrast to the FHStG, the PUG does not contain any regulations based in study law, but in this respect refers to international standards. The Universities Act 2002 (UG<sup>5</sup>) is not immediately legally binding for private universities, but rather serves as a benchmark for the reading of international standards.

The HS-QSG makes reference to the UG and the Federal Act on the Danube University Krems (DUK-Act<sup>6</sup>) insofar as it standardises the obligation for the universities regulated within this to subject their quality management system to regular audits as per HS-QSG. AQ Austria's obligation to produce a report every three years about the development of quality assurance also refers to universities in accordance with UG and the DUK-Act<sup>7</sup>.

For the implementation of the quality assurance process, declared regulations and directives issued by the board of AQ Austria, which have been published on the website of AQ Austria<sup>8</sup>, were also explicitly valid as transitional arrangements in the report period.

## 1.2 Mission

AQ Austria, as a sector-spanning agency, is committed to be a driving force for the quality development of higher education institutions. By taking into account the internal quality management systems of higher education institutions, AQ Austria wants to ensure and document that these systems correspond with high national and international standards and that they improve the quality of higher education provision. Fostering the quality enhancement of higher education institutions is a central claim of the processes AQ Austria designs and implements taking into account national and international benchmarks. This claim also derives from the legally assigned tasks of the Agency<sup>9</sup>.

1 Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Hochschulqualitätssicherungsgesetz – HS-QSG), BGBl. I Nr. 74/2011

2 General Administrative Procedures Act (AVG), BGBl. (WV) 51/1991, idgF. (Mention in § 25 para 6 HS-QSG regulated deviance from AVG)

3 Federal Act on Private Universities (Private University Act – PUG), BGBl. I 74/2011

4 Federal Act on University of Applied Sciences Degree Programmes (University of Applied Sciences Act – FHStG), BGBl. 340/1993, in the version currently in force

5 Federal Act on the Organisation of the Universities and their Studies (Universities Act 2002 – UG), BGBl. I 120/2002, in the version currently in force

6 Federal Act on the Danube University Krems (DUK-Act 2004), BGBl. I 22/2004

7 cf. § 28 para. 2 HS-QSG

8 [www.aq.ac.at](http://www.aq.ac.at)

9 § 3 para. 3 HS-QSG.

It is essential for the acceptance of AQ Austria that its processes are independent and adhere to academic standards and that they contribute to the quality enhancement of the higher education institutions<sup>10</sup>.

As places for the generation of knowledge, higher education institutions need a high degree of autonomy. This is based on the fundamental chartered legal right of freedom in teaching and research as well as autonomy in decision-making, such as in the organisational design of higher education institutions. The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria takes into account and respects the uniqueness of each individual higher education institution and their individual goals. Accordingly, it considers it inappropriate to impose specific academic standards on the higher education institutions, since their definition should come from the academic sector and indeed from within each institution itself. AQ Austria sees that its main task is to evaluate, by way of peer review, the validity and plausibility of such provisions.

The creation of a common European Higher Education Area requires mutual trust in terms of the quality of institutions. Therefore, quality assurance takes place not only in a national context, but is based on common European standards. Quality assurance processes must be internationally recognized and must allow for an exchange of international expertise. In this respect, AQ Austria recognizes the necessity of continuing the intense international engagement of its three predecessor organisations.

These principles are laid down in AQ Austria's Mission Statement which provides orientation for all fields of activity and reflects the high quality claims of the Agency.

### 1.3 Tasks

According to the legal mandate, the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria is responsible for all higher educational institutions (public universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities, with the exception of teacher training colleges) in Austria<sup>11</sup> and has a legally regulated wide range of tasks in the field of external quality assurance<sup>12</sup>:

1. Development and implementation of external quality assurance processes, at least audit and accreditation processes, according to national and international standards;
2. Accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes (i.e., universities of applied sciences and their study programmes as well as private universities and their programmes);
3. Reports to the national parliament by way of the competent Federal Minister;
4. Publication of the results of the quality assurance processes by way of report
5. Continuous supervision of accredited higher education institutions and their programmes regarding accreditation requirements;
6. Tasks in accordance with the provisions of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG) and the Private University Act (PUG);
7. Certification of higher education institutions based on an audit (i.e., public universities and universities of applied sciences);
8. Conducting studies and system analysis, evaluations and projects;
9. Information and advice on issues of quality assurance and quality development;
10. International cooperation in the field of quality assurance.

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria is thus characterized by a range of tasks, which includes the state accreditation of universities and their programmes (private universities, universities of applied sciences), the certification of university internal quality management systems (public universities, universities of applied sciences), consulting services and studies and system analysis as well as the carrying out of quality assurance processes at non-Austrian universities.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.aq.ac.at/en/about-us/mission-statement.php>

<sup>11</sup> § 1 para. 1 HS-QSG

<sup>12</sup> § 3 para. 3 HS-QSG

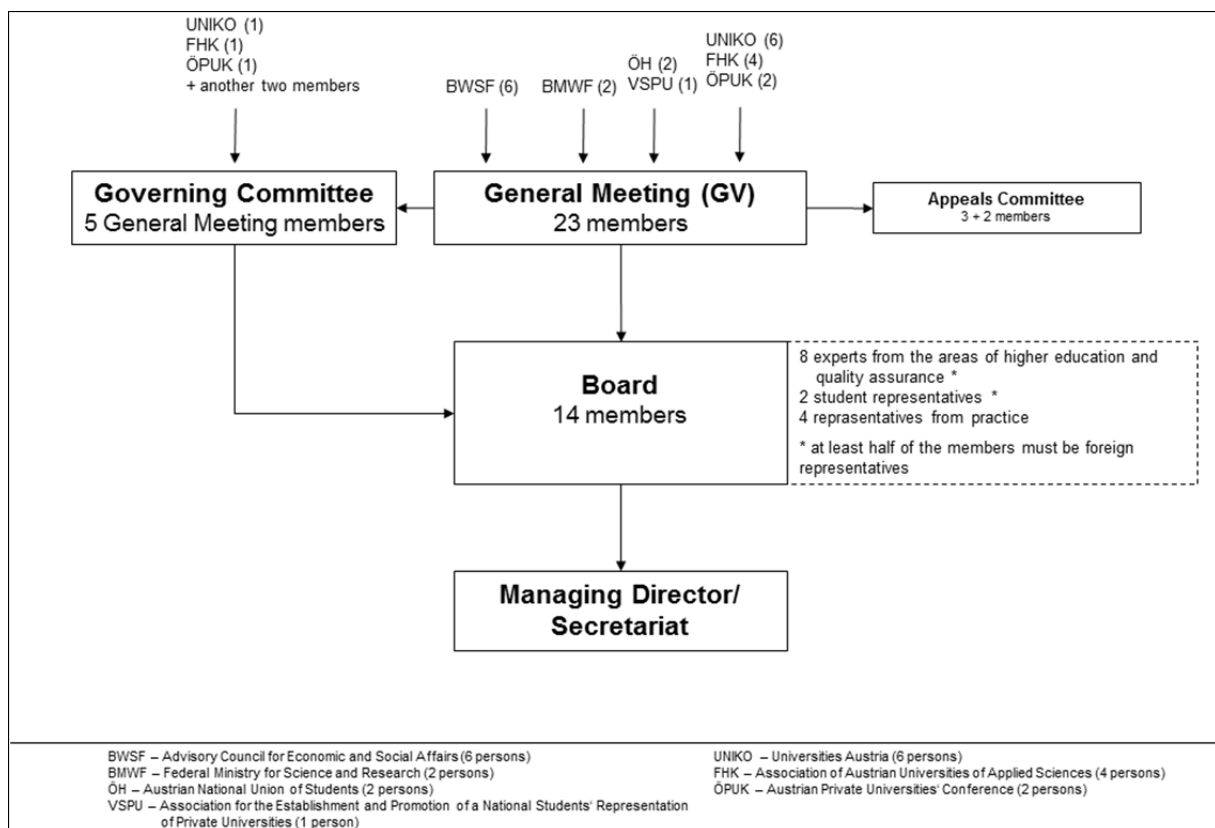
## 1.4 Structure of the Agency

Its bodies, their powers and composition are legally determined by the HS-QSG.

The law is based upon the principle of bringing independent expertise and stakeholder participation together with a strong international component. This feature of AQ Austria can be clearly seen within its organisational structure.

The relevant interest groups are represented in the General Meeting, and one of its most important tasks is the nomination of ten of the fourteen members of the Board. In the five-person Governing Committee, which is also elected by the General Meeting, all three of the higher education sectors are represented as well as other stakeholders. The Governing Committee has a primarily advisory function in terms of the design of quality assurance processes as well as the operative tasks of the agency.

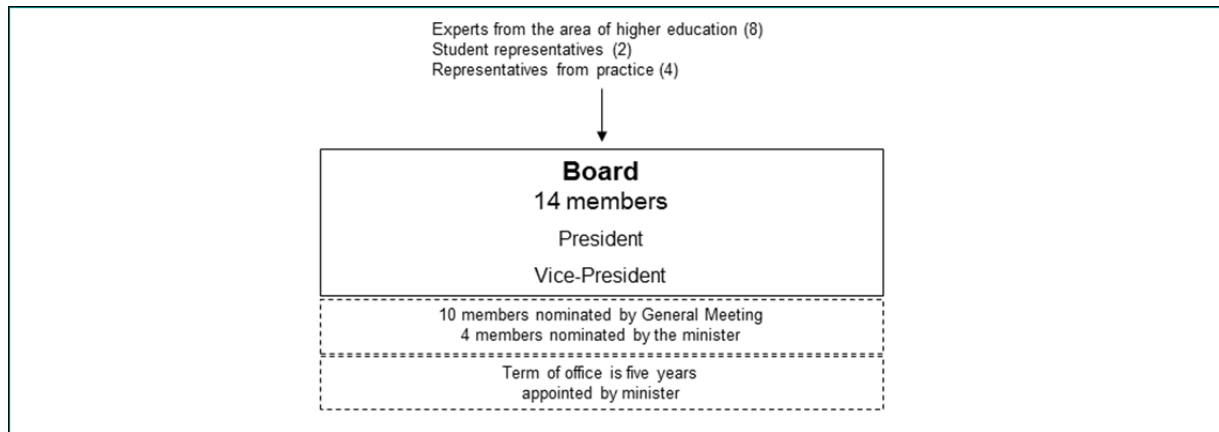
Thus the higher education institutions, the students and further stakeholders are involved; however, they neither do have any decision making competences concerning the design of quality assurance processes nor concerning decisions regarding their results. Only the board, composed of independent experts who do not act as representatives of the 'official' positions of any interest groups, does have these competences. The composition of the board also takes into account the involvement of experts from all relevant fields, at least half of whom come from abroad (according to § 6 Z 1 and 2 HS-QSG). At least 45% of the members of all agency bodies must be women.



In the following chapters the competences, appointment, requirement profile and the composition of the agency's bodies will be described.

### 1.4.1 Board

The Board is the central independent decision-making body of AQ Austria. This committee of experts is in particular responsible for all decisions regarding accreditation and certification, procedural guidelines and standards, supervision responsibilities vis-à-vis accredited educational institutions in Austria, and the publication of results of quality assurance processes, as well as for the organisation of the agency<sup>13</sup>. Because of the various types of quality assurance processes, the Board possesses regulatory as well as non-regulatory competencies.



As per paragraph 6 of the HS-QSG, the Board is made up of fourteen members, of that:

- eight members, who are experts from the field of higher education and who must possess academic qualification and experience in the field of quality assurance. The members must represent different sectors of higher education. At least half of them must be foreign members.
- two members should be student representatives; of the two one from abroad.
- four members from the professional practical field with expertise in national and international higher education, experience in university-related occupational areas and the ability to judge matters of quality assurance.

The term of office is five years with the possibility of one reappointment. The members of the Board elect a President and a Vice-President for a term of five years<sup>14</sup>. The President chairs the Board and the agency and also represents the agency in public<sup>15 16</sup>.

The Board must meet non-publically at least two times a year, and in reality meets about six times a year. For decision-making it is required that at least ten members are present, whereby at least eight members have to vote in favour of a proposal in order for it to be approved<sup>17</sup>.

The assignment of tasks and composition guarantee that all relevant decisions in accreditation processes, from the design of the processes to the accreditation decision are made by independent experts involving stakeholders and international perspectives.

### 1.4.2 Governing Committee

The Governing Committee is the strategic advisory body. It consists of five members who are elected from the General Meeting<sup>18</sup>. There is one member respectively representing the public university sector the private university sector and the sector of the universities of applied

<sup>13</sup> § 9 para. 1 HS-QSG.

<sup>14</sup> § 7 HS-QSG.

<sup>15</sup> § 10 para. 1 HS-QSG.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.aq.ac.at/de/ueber-uns/dokumente-ueber-uns/Geschaeftsordnung-Board.pdf> [German only]

<sup>17</sup> § 8 HS-QSG.

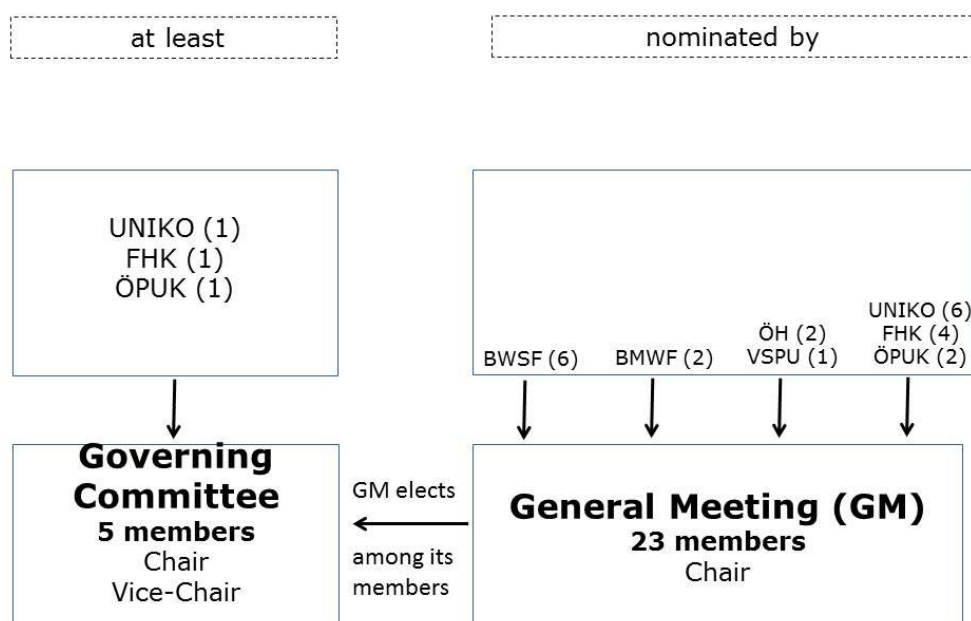
<sup>18</sup> § 5 para. 1 HS-QSG.

sciences<sup>19</sup>, furthermore students and the professional field are also represented. The members serve a five-year term and reappointments are allowed. The Committee exercises its advisory function through communicating informed views<sup>20</sup>, especially with regard to the procedural guidelines and standards of the agency as well as regarding financial planning, progress reporting, job applications and the rules of procedure. The structure ensures that stakeholders are systematically integrated in the continued development of quality assurance processes. In contrast to the Board, the members here function as representatives of the respective organisations from which they are sent.

### 1.4.3 General Meeting

In the General Meeting the essential interest groups are represented, who delegate a varying number of voluntary representatives. These interest groups include<sup>21</sup>:

- The Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs (six representatives),
- The Austrian National Union of Students (two representatives),
- The Association for the Establishment and Promotion of a Nationwide Students' Representation of Private Universities (one representative),
- The Universities Austria (six representatives),
- The Association of Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences (four representatives),
- The Austrian Private Universities' Conference (two representatives),
- The Federal Ministry for Science and Research (two representatives)



BWSF – Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs (6 persons)

BMWF – Federal Ministry of Science and Research (2 persons)

ÖH – Austrian National Union of Students (2 persons)

VSPU – Association for the Establishment and Promotion of a National Students' Representation of Private Universities (1 person)

UNIKO – Universities Austria (6 persons)

FHK – Association of Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences (4 persons)

ÖPUK – Austrian Private Universities' Conference (2 persons)

<sup>19</sup> § 12 para. 2 HS-QSG.

<sup>20</sup> § 5 para. 2 HS-QSG.

<sup>21</sup> § 11 para. 1 HS-QSG.

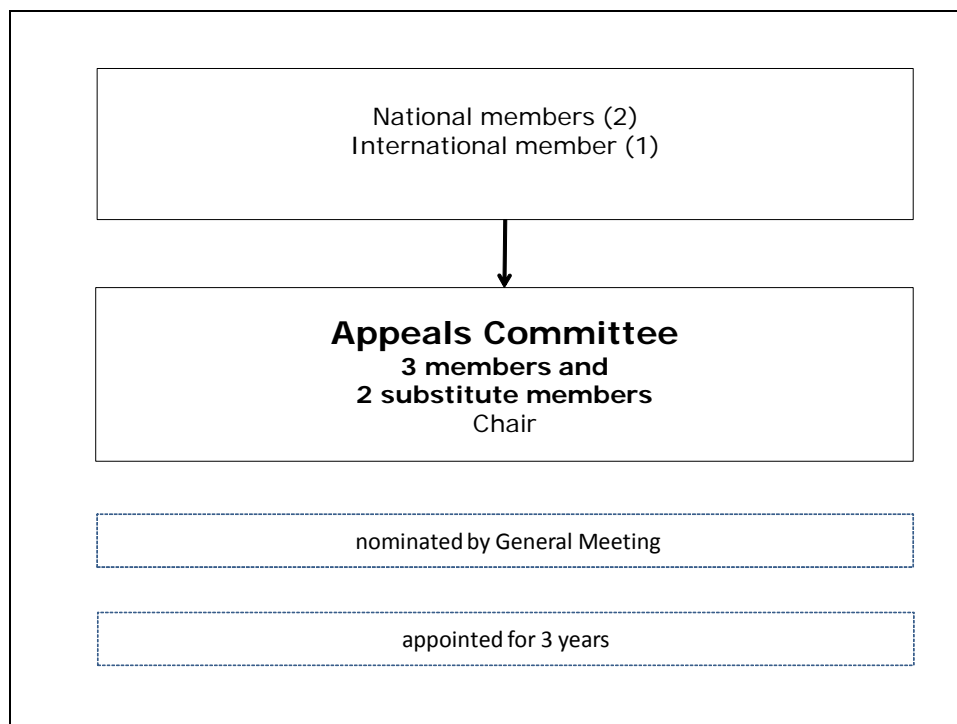
The representatives are appointed by the federal minister at the suggestion of the respective organisations for a period of five years and reappointments are allowed. The General Meeting elects a chairperson directly from the group.

Duties of the General Meeting are, in particular, the election of the Governing Committee, the nomination and appointment of the Appeals Committee, and the nomination of the members of the Board<sup>22</sup>, who need to be accepted by way of a two-thirds majority vote<sup>23</sup>. All other decisions are made by a simple majority vote, assuming that at least fifteen members are present<sup>24</sup>.

The assignment of tasks and composition guarantee the close connection of the Agency to the relevant stakeholder organisations. It safeguards that interests will be balanced and none of the involved parties gains too much influence. The nomination of board members and receiving the auditor's report are important tasks of the stakeholder representatives.

#### 1.4.4 Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee is responsible for dealing with appeals from higher education institutions contesting the accreditation process and certification decisions<sup>25 26</sup>.



The Appeals Committee consists of two Austrian and two foreign members coming from higher education institutions with expertise in the field of quality assurance and with legal qualifications, as well as, in the case of a conflict of interest, one Austrian and one foreign substitute member<sup>27</sup>. They are appointed for a period of three years by the General Meeting with the possibility of reappointment<sup>28</sup>. The members are not allowed to belong to any other body of the agency, and they must operate without instruction<sup>29</sup>. The Committee makes decisions based on a simple majority vote<sup>30</sup>.

22 § 12 para. 1 HS-QSG

23 § 7 para. 2 HS-QSG.

24 § 12 para. 2 HS-QSG.

25 § 13 HS-QSG.

26 <https://www.aq.ac.at/de/ueber-uns/dokumente-ueber-uns/Geschaeftsordnung- Beschwerekommission.pdf> [German only]

27 § 13 para. 2 HS-QSG.

28 § 13 HS-QSG.

29 § 13 para. 4 HS-QSG.

30 § 13 para. 7 HS-QSG.

## 1.5 Secretariat

The secretariat of AQ Austria<sup>31</sup> is led by the managing director, who handles the day-to-day business of the agency. The employees have qualifications and work experience in teaching, research, university management, university research and quality assurance.

The tasks and competences of the employees are the following:

- The provision of information regarding questions of quality assurance (via communication with higher education institutions, participation in events, publications)
- The design and development of methods and processes of external quality assurance
- Research about existing methods and standards
- Development of procedural guidelines
- Searching external experts
- Coordination of quality assurance processes
- Information of universities and universities of applied sciences in self evaluation (e.g. by feedback, interviews)
- Provision of methodology and content to experts/advisors
- Coordination and moderation of follow-up processes
- Studies and system analyses
- International Cooperation

Employees are responsible for the individual processes of the agency. They are also the contact persons for the higher education institutions.

## 2 Ressources

### 2.1 Financing

The financing of the Agency is funded by annually allocated federal funds and own revenues which are generated by fulfilling the Agency's legal tasks<sup>32</sup>.

The Agency is entitled to charge fees for the carrying out of quality assurance processes which includes the actual costs of the evaluation as well as a flat charge for the processes<sup>33</sup>.

In the reporting period AQ Austria is in funds of € 2.302.460,20. € 2.196.350,20 of which are federal funds and € 106.110,10 are revenues from quality assurance procedures and others. The Agency spent € 1.662.500,90, € 460.992,35 of which for labour costs and € 453.400,61 are investments concerning the establishment of the Agency, especially the secretariat.

For the financial year 2014, funds to the tune of 2.17 million euros are anticipated as being required, explicitly this also includes funds for staff training measures in addition to specialized trainings through participation in conferences, projects, etc.

### 2.2 Staff

In the reporting period the work of the secretariat was marked by a tight personnel situation. Shortly after the founding of the Agency three employees left, two of whom are on unpaid leave. As of 31 December 2012 26 people (four of whom are on leave) have been working for AQ Austria which corresponds to 17,75 FTE. When the Agency started its work, there were five vacancies. In the reporting period only the position of the managing director has been filled, the deputy managing director and three other jobs have been filled in September 2013.

<sup>31</sup><https://www.aq.ac.at/de/ueber-uns/dokumente-ueber-uns/Geschaeftsordnung-Geschaeftsstelle.pdf> [German only]

<sup>32</sup> § 15 para. 1 HS-QSG.

<sup>33</sup> § 20 para. 1 HS-QSG.

## 3 The activities of AQ Austria

### 3.1 Structure of the agency

The report period featured activity in terms of building up the agency legally, in terms of technical procedures, and on an organisational level. The board started its activity at its first meeting on 16.01.2012. It was possible at this point to use as a support the previous work that had been completed by the offices of the three predecessor organisations (AQA, FHR, ÖAR), under the leadership of the three management units as a steering group. In cross-office working groups, the preparation for setting up AQ Austria was started in August 2011: This included the preparation of the constitution of the board of AQ Austria, personnel transition, leasing of suitable office spaces and the acquisition of the necessary infrastructure, setting up a new, comprehensive accounting system, and developing a corporate identity for the agency. As well as this, the quality assurance processes that were pending at the preceding establishments had to be executed on a parallel basis, as well as completed and, in some cases, transitioned into the jurisdiction of AQ Austria, and the first applications submitted to AQ Austria had to be processed.

#### 3.1.1 The constitution of the board

The board of AQ Austria as the central, decision making body, began its activity on 16.01.2012 and selected, on 16.01.2012, Univ. Prof. Dr. Anke Hanft from the University of Oldenburg as President, and Univ. Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mazal, from the University of Vienna, as Vice President. The constituent meetings of the General Meeting followed on 10.10.2011 and 07.11.2011; this body selected, on 07.11.2011, Vice Rector Dr. Karin Riegler as its Chairperson and Dr. Helmut Holzinger as its Deputy. The Governing Committee came together on 07.11.2011 and selected Managing Director Dr. Helmut Holzinger as its Chairperson and Vice Rector Dr. Karin Riegler as the Deputy. On 16.02.2012, the Appeals Commission members were selected by the General Meeting and, finally, the constituent meeting of the Appeals Commission took place on 19.04.2013, which the chairperson Assistant Prof. Dr. Bettina Perthold-Stoitzner from the University of Vienna attended, while Univ. Prof. Dr. Walter Berka, from University of Salzburg, was selected as the Deputy<sup>34</sup>. In its first meeting, the board adopted its rules of procedures and supplemented this on the 14.12.2012 with rules of procedures of the Appeals Commission. In line with HS-QSG, the General Meeting was included in the decision-making process. The General Meeting and the Governing Committee put forward an agenda on 07.11.2011.

#### 3.1.2 Setting up the office

AQ Austria obtained premises in July 2012 at Renngasse 5 and set up its office; within this, the offices of the three predecessor organisations were consolidated. In its meeting of 14.12.2012, the board gave the office rules of procedures, which are based on the legal order and provides for the four work areas of accreditation, audit, analysis and consultancy, as well as internal administration.

#### 3.1.3 Transitory regulations for quality assurance processes

No moratorium in the area of accreditation is associated with setting up AQ Austria. The obligation to accreditation therefore fundamentally continued unchanged. However, the legislator provided for a transitory phase, in which both the Fachhochschulrat (the University of Applied Sciences Council) and the Akkreditierungsrat (Austrian Accreditation Council) continue to operate the pending processes until 30.07.2012, and only transition these to AQ Austria as of 01.08.2012. In order to be ready for the implementation of the accreditation and

<sup>34</sup> Composition of agency bodies and committees see appendix

audit process as soon as possible, the board adopted, in its 4th meeting on 08.05.2012, transitory regulations for the accreditation process in the University of Applied Sciences sector and in the private universities sector, and a transitory audit guideline on 26.06.2012. For these decisions, existing procedural foundations have been adjusted to the new legal situation for the predecessor organisations. For the time being, no additional reforming measures have been implemented that, for example, arose from the legal mandate of acquiring cross-sector standards for quality assurance processes and from the consideration of good practice in quality assurance in European higher education institutions. The board started this fundamental revision of the procedural regulations and assessment criteria in its 5th meeting on 21.06.2012. The board selected a participative approach for the revision and assessment criteria; this approach enabled universities and other interested parties, in a multistage process, to apply their expertise usefully and to assert their interests. On 13.06.2013, after the end of the report period, the board adopted a new decree for university accreditation, a new decree for accrediting private universities, and the new audit guideline. At the same time, the decree for universities providing annual reports and the revision of the decree for private universities to provide annual reports were revised and passed. In line with HS-QSG, the Advisory Board was included in the creation of the guidelines and the decrees.

The board, in its meeting of 23.10.2012, adopted guidelines for international accreditation as a further procedural foundation; these guidelines apply in accreditation processes outside Austria.

## 3.2 Quality assurance procedures performed<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2.1 Accreditation in the Universities of Applied Sciences sector

From 01.03. to 31.12.2012, program accreditations were pending, which were passed over by the University of Applied Sciences Council to AQ Austria and were decided in the report period. Alongside this, AQ Austria made decisions about 9 applications for amendments and 26 redeployment applications. Fachhochschulstudiengänge Burgenland GmbH and FHW Wien were awarded the title of "Fachhochschule" or "University of Applied Sciences".

### 3.2.2 Accreditations in the private universities sector

From 01.03. to 31.12.2012, 4 processes were pending on accreditation as private universities. Furthermore, applications for accreditation from 14 new courses at existing private universities, and 3 processes for accreditation in 1 new location, were processed. Of these, it proved possible to conclude 12 course accreditations by 31.12.2012. At the end of December 2012, a total of 12 private universities with 188 courses were credited in Austria.

### 3.2.3 Supervision

In the framework of supervision, the board of AQ Austria revoked the accreditation of the PEF Private University of management in line with Section 26 Paragraph 2 Item 1 HS-QSG.

### 3.2.4 Audit process

Based on the guidelines for the audit process adopted by the board on 26.06.2012, AQ Austria held negotiations with 4 universities, which resulted after the end of the report period in the opening of audit processes at the Paris Lodron University in Salzburg and the Universität für Bodenkultur in Vienna. These processes were not concluded in the report period.

<sup>35</sup> See diagramm in the Appendix

### 3.2.5 International procedures

Based on the transitory guidelines for international accreditation adopted by the board on 23.12.2012, AQ Austria held negotiations with the KIMEP University, Kazakhstan, which after the end of the report period resulted in the opening of an accreditation process for 16 courses.

### 3.3 Reports and analysis

In Spring 2012, three "Quality development in the appeals process" workshops were held, with many Austrian universities taking part. The "Professionalization of the appeals process", "The composition of the Appeals Commission", and "The constitution of preselection" workshops built upon the project executed, and concluded in 2011, by the preceding establishment AQA:

"Quality development in appeals management at Austrian universities." The results of the workshops are summarised and published in the Annual for University Law (Jahrbuch für Hochschulrecht) 2013.

### 3.4 International cooperation

Quality assurance for the Austrian universities sectors must absolutely be aligned internationally. Firstly, international cooperation is necessary on an operational level, for example in working with experts, is important for a country that is relatively small when compared with other countries in Europe. International components also play an important role on a fundamental level for all of AQ Austria's activities. Quality assurance processes must be designed in such a way that they meet the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in order to find recognition among European universities and those further afield. The HS-QSG also enables public universities and Universities of Applied Sciences to select another internationally recognised agency for the implementation of an audit as per Section 19 Paragraph 1 HS-USG alongside AQ Austria, which has been accepted into an list supplied by BMWF by decree. By the end of the report period, there was not an decree published yeat..

This shows how important it is for AQ Austria to the international aligned. The agency therefore views itself as an international agency, which is clear not least in the composition of the board as a central decreeing body, to which four renowned experts from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Hungary and Germany belong. Immediately after starting its activity, the agency started to develop an internationalisation strategy, which was adopted in the 14th meeting on 14.04.2013. With this strategy, AQ Austria stresses the close collaboration with neighbouring countries and, in particular, with the countries in south-eastern Europe. It supports cooperation with quality assurance agencies in other countries (e.g. through joint procedural development and implementation, and providing assistance in building a national quality assurance systems), and offers universities international accreditation, audits and advice. The international commitment is intended both to benefit Austrian universities and the agency for the purpose of their personnel development.

AQ Austria actively participates in the relevant European and international associations in the area of quality assurance and is, for example, a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), as well as the Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CEENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). AQ Austria is also a partner in other projects and work groups on a European level, such as the Quality Ordered Network (QAN) and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). Collaboration with associations within specific disciplines within Europe (e.g., the Europäische Vereinigung der Musikhochschulen AEC) supports the development of quality assurance processes, which live up to the standards set by AQ Austria and, equally, discipline-specific requirements. These processes can both be applied by Austrian universities and by universities outside Austria.

On 20.07.2012, AQ Austria issued an application to the German Accreditation Council for approval for accreditation procedures in Germany, and this was approved after the expiry of the report period. AQ Austria is in the agency register of Kazakhstan.

Overall, the record of the 1st 9 months is read positive in terms of international activity and international recognition. This means that AQ Austria is in a position to make a contribution to the international visibility and recognition of the Austrian university system.

## 4 Appendix

### 4.1 Appendix A

#### Composition of Bodies and Committees (term of office in brackets)

##### **Board members**

Experts from the area of higher education:

- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Anke Hanft, President of the Board (January 2012 – January 2017)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mazal, Vice-president of the Board (January 2012 – January 2017)
- PhD Peter Findlay, MA (January 2012 – January 2017)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ada Pellert (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Christina Rozsnyai, M.A., M.L.S. (January 2012 – January 2017)
- Mag. Dr. Ferry Stocker (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hannelore Weck-Hannemann (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hans Weder (January 2012 – January 2015)

Student representatives:

- Julian Hiller (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Mag. (FH) Karin Schönhofer (January 2012 – January 2017)

Representatives from practice:

- Mag. Gudrun Feucht, M.A. (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Dr. Valerie Höllinger, MBA, MBL (January 2012 – January 2015)
- Mag. Thomas Mayr (January 2012 – January 2017)
- Mag. Peter Schlögl (January 2012 – January 2017)

##### **Members of the Governing Committee**

- Dr. Helmut Holzinger, Chair of the Governing Committee
- Dr. Karin Riegler, Vice-chair of the Governing Committee
- Prof. Dr. Karl Wöber
- Mag. Gabriele Schmid
- Beate Tremml, B.A. (econ.)

##### **Members of the General Meeting**

Representatives of the Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs:

- Prof. Dr. Michael Landertshammer (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Mag. Ulrike Österreicher (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Ing. Alexander Prischl (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Prof. Dr. Gerhard Riemer (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Mag. Gabriele Schmid (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Dr. Dwora Stein (October 2011 – October 2016)

Representatives of the Austrian National Union of Students (ÖH):

- Eugenio Gualtieri (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Beate Tremml (October 2011 – October 2016)

Representative of the Association for the Establishment and Promotion of a National Students' Representation of Private Universities:

- Daniel Hofstätter (October 2011 – October 2016)

Representatives of Universities Austria:

- Dr. Karin Riegler, Vice-chair of the Governing Committee (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Margaret Friedrich (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Schmidinger (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schütz (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Friederike Wall (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Mag. Elisabeth Fiorioli (May 2012 – May 2017)

Representatives of the Association of Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences:

- Mag. Dr. Erich Brugger (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Dr. Helmut Holzinger, Chair of the Governing Committee (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Prof. (FH) Barbara Schmid, MSc. (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Dr. Doris Walter (October 2011 – October 2016)

Representatives of the Austrian Private Universities' Conference:

- Ranko Markovic (November 2012 – November 2017)
- Prof. Dr. Karl Wöber (November 2012 – November 2017)

Representatives of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research:

- Mag. Eva Erlinger-Schacherbauer (October 2011 – October 2016)
- Mag. Friedrich Faulhammer (October 2011 – October 2016)

#### **Members of the Appeals Committee**

- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Walter Berka (national) (February 2012 – February 2014)
- Ass. Prof. Dr. Bettina Perthold-Stoitzner (national) (February 2012 – February 2015)
- Prof. PhDr. Jana Gerslova, CSc. (international) (Februar 2012 – Februar 2015)

Substitute members:

- Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. Christiane Spiel (national) (February 2012 – February 2015)
- Dr. Guy Haug, MA, MBA (international) (February 2012 – February 2015)

## 4.2 Appendix B

### Overview of accreditation processes

#### Universities of Applied Sciences

Course-providing body	Type	Study programme	Type of study pro-	Date of Administrative Decision
All existing universities of applied sciences	Institutional Accreditation			09.05.2012
Fachhochschulstudien-gänge Burgenland GmbH	University of applied sciences			23.10.2012
FHW Wien	University of applied sciences			23.10.2012
FH Kärnten	EA*	Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen	BA***	24.09.2012
FH bfi Wien	EA*	Strategic HR Management in Europe	MA****	18.09.2012
FH Campus Wien	EA*	Clinical Engineering	BA***	18.09.2012
FH Campus Wien	EA*	Health Assisting Engineering	MA****	18.09.2012
FH Oberösterreich Studienbetriebs GmbH	EA*	Mechatronik/Wirtschaft	BA***	18.09.2012
FH Oberösterreich Studienbetriebs GmbH	EA*	Mechatronik/Wirtschaft	MA****	18.09.2012
FH Salzburg	EA*	Applied Image and Signal Processing	MA****	18.09.2012
FH Salzburg	EA*	Innovationsentwicklung im Social-Profit-Sektor	MA****	18.09.2012
Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt für Wirtschaft und Technik GmbH	EA*	Regenerative Energiesysteme und technisches Energiemanagement	MA****	18.09.2012
Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt für Wirtschaft und Technik GmbH	EA*	Aerospace Engineering	MA****	18.09.2012

Course-providing body	Type	Study programme	Type of study programme	Date of administrative decision
IMC Fachhochschule Krems GmbH	EA*	Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege	BA***	18.09.2012
IMC Fachhochschule Krems GmbH	EA*	Musiktherapie	MA****	18.09.2012
IMC Fachhochschule Krems GmbH	EA*	Umwelt- und Nachhaltigkeitsmanagement	MA****	18.09.2012
MCI GmbH	EA*	Umwelt-, Verfahrens- & Energietechnik	MA****	18.09.2012
Fachhochschule Vorarlberg	ÄA**	Mechatronik	MA****	26.07.2012
FH Technikum Wien	ÄA**	Sportgerätetechnik	MA****	23.07.2012
FH Technikum Wien	ÄA**	Technisches Umweltmanagement und Ökotoxikologie	MA****	23.07.2012
FH Technikum Wien	ÄA**	Intelligente Verkehrssysteme	BA***	23.07.2012
FH Krems	ÄA**	Management	MA****	27.09.2012
FH Campus 02	ÄA**	Innovationsmanagement	BA***	24.07.2012
FH Campus 02	ÄA**	Informationstechnologien & IT Marketing	MA****	24.07.2012
FH Campus 02	ÄA**	Automatisierungstechnik	BA***	24.07.2012
Lauder Business School	ÄA*	Intercultural Business	BA***	27.08.2012

\* EA: Initial application

\*\* ÄA: application for modification

\*\*\* BA: Bachelor

\*\*\*\* MA: Master

Private universities

### Applications for Institutional Accreditation

From 01.03. to 31.12.2012 four applications for accreditation as private university have been processed (still pending):

- MEN Megatrend Education Network GmbH („Megatrend University in Vienna“)
- World Wide Education Aus- und Weiterbildung AG („OUA Open University Austria – Privatuniversität Wels AG“)
- Tarogato GmbH („IBS Privatuniversität“)
- Karl Landsteiner Privatuniversität für Gesundheitswissenschaften Errichtungsgesellschaft mbH („KLPU – Karl Landsteiner Privatuniversität“)

### Applications for Programme Accreditation

From 01.03. to 31.12.2012 14 applications for programme accreditation have been processed:

Private university	Study programme	Date of accreditation
Danube Private University	University training course Endodontie	21.09.2012
Danube Private University	University training course Oral Surgeon/ Implantologist (Full-time)	21.09.2012
Danube Private University	University training course Orale Chirurgie/ Implantologie – Clinical Oral Surgery/ Implantology (vocational course)	21.09.2012
Danube Private University	University training course Clinical Orthodontist (Full-time)	21.09.2012
Danube Private University	University training course Kieferorthopädie – Orthodontics (vocational course)	21.09.2012
Danube Private University	Bachelor programme Dental Hygiene	Not finished in reporting period
Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität	Master programme Social Design	21.09.2012
MODUL University Vienna Privatuniversität	Bachelor programme International Management	24.09.2012

Private university	Study programme	Date of accreditation
MODUL University Vienna Privatuniversität	Bachelor programme BBA in Tourism, Hotel Management and Operations	24.09.2012
MODUL University Vienna Privatuniversität	Master programme MBA	24.09.2012
MODUL University Vienna Privatuniversität	PhD programme Business and Socioeconomic Science	24.09.2012
Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität	Master programme Pflegewissenschaft	26.09.2012
Private Universität für Gesundheitswissenschaften, Medizinische Informatik und Technik	University training course Master für Gewerbliche Gesundheitsberufe	Not finished in reporting period
Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität	Bakkalaureat programme Augenheilkunde und Optometrie	Withdrawal 10.09.2012

#### New sites of private universities

In the reporting period three applications for accreditation of new sites by Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität Wien have been processed (still pending):

Private university	Site
Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität	Ljubljana (Bakkalaureats- and Magister study programme Psychotherapiewissenschaft)
Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität	Berlin (Bachelor Psychologie)
Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität	Klagenfurt (Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Medicine)

#### Imprint

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Vienna, December 2013

