

Quality Management in Teaching and Learning at the University of Würzburg

I. General

In Germany, bachelor's and master's degree programmes are subject to accreditation, which means that they must regularly undergo quality control. Through system accreditation, a university proves that it has established a sufficient internal quality management system to take over the task of quality assurance, but also of quality development itself. The University of Würzburg has successfully completed such a system accreditation. This ensures that all study programmes pass through the quality management system and are accredited. With system accreditation, a higher education institution receives the right to award the seal of the Accreditation Council (see on the right) for its self-assessed study programmes.



In the course of system accreditation, a higher education institution must demonstrate that it systematically implements the formal and academic criteria laid down in the [specimen decree](#). To this end, the quality management system must provide for regular evaluations of the study programmes and the areas of performance relevant to teaching and learning, involving internal and external students, external academic experts, representatives of professional practice and graduates. If the evaluations show a need for action, the necessary measures are taken and implemented. The data required for the implementation of the quality management system concept are collected university-wide and on a regular basis. Further information on the legal framework of system (re)accreditation can be found on the websites of the [German Accreditation Council](#).

On March 19, 2018, the Accreditation Agency [AQAS](#) certified the successful completion of the system accreditation for the University of Würzburg. With its [quality management system](#), the University of Würzburg thus fulfills the legal requirements for the quality assurance of its study programmes. As a system-accredited university, the University of Würzburg has since been legitimized to independently perform the accreditation of its study programmes. The system accreditation of the internal quality management system was proclaimed until September 30, 2024. Since spring 2022, the University of Würzburg has been in the process of preparing for system reaccreditation - again with the Accreditation Agency AQAS.

II. Fundamentals of the Quality Management System

Quality Understanding

The University of Würzburg's understanding of quality articulates the underlying principles of the quality management (short: QM) system. These are:

- Participation

For the acceptance of a binding QM system, broad participation in its design and ongoing operation is important. Therefore, the relevant status groups and all faculties participate in all central processes.

- Shapeability

In the QM system, central elements as well as elements organized at the faculty level are intertwined. The central elements ensure the binding framework of the QM system through external specifications and also show the individual scope for design of the faculties.

- Efficiency

When building up, implementing, and further developing the QM system and its components, care is taken to achieve the respective objectives while conserving physical and human resources.

- **Communication**

Even in a QM system with defined processes and instruments for quality development, the most important thing is to talk to each other, to discuss critically and to learn from each other. Openness and trust are a necessity for this, to which all participants contribute.

- **Transparency**

Information about the objectives, functioning and responsibilities of the QM system as well as its components is provided to specific target groups. Quality-relevant results are discussed and further developments are initiated.

- **Closed Quality Cycles**

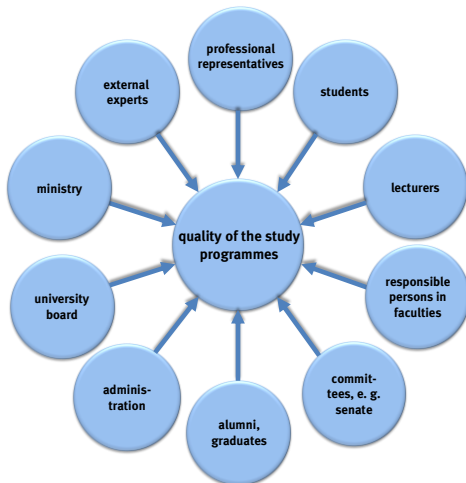
With its QM system, the University of Würzburg has established continuous improvement processes based on the Deming principle of Plan-Do-Check-Act. With each run, improvements are made that raise the processes to a higher quality level.

PDCA-Quality Cycle

With its QM system, the University of Würzburg has established continuous improvement processes based on the principle of Plan-Do-Check-Act. Particular attention is paid to deriving binding measures for the further development of teaching and learning and to the monitoring of their implementation.



Overall View of the Quality of Study Programmes

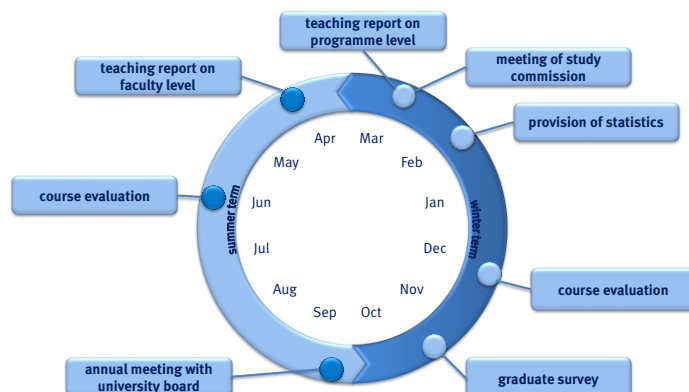


The main focus of quality management at the University of Würzburg is on the study programmes. The assessment of their quality is based on contributions from various stakeholders.

The quality cycles at the programme level, i.e., the annual monitoring and the 8-year-cycle, take into account the perspectives of all the groups shown.

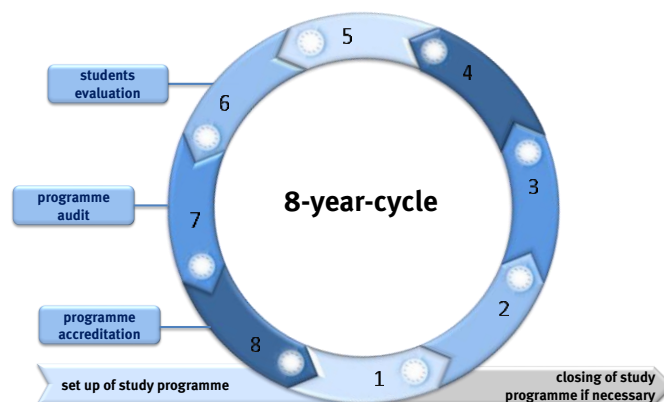
Annual Monitoring

The University of Würzburg relies on an annual monitoring to check the quality of its study programmes, to detect possible misdevelopments and to be able to react promptly with measures. The Study Commission uses the results of various surveys, statistics and rankings, qualitative statements from the reporting system and agreements from the faculty meeting as a basis for discussing the quality of the study programmes and initiating further developments.



8-Year-Cycle for Quality Development

The University of Würzburg has committed to accredit its study programmes in an interval of eight years. All study programmes are thoroughly evaluated in the sixth year by means of the students' evaluation, and in the seventh year they are assessed in greater depth within the framework of the programme audit, with the involvement of external expertise. The decision on programme accreditation is made in the eighth year.



III. Instruments in the Quality Management System

Survey System

At the University of Würzburg, surveys in the field of teaching and learning are understood as an instrument of quality assurance and development, which is used to systematically collect, evaluate, and discuss data and information on offered study programmes and conditions, the associated administration and services, and the infrastructure, and to initiate further developments.

The University of Würzburg's survey system covers the entire student life cycle with regular and event-related surveys, which generate a significant share of the data for the QM system. Students' entry into their study programme is accompanied by a study start survey that takes place every two years. The further progression through the degree programme is covered by regular course evaluations and study programme evaluations. Every second year, the graduate survey provides data on the graduates' retrospective evaluation of studies and their first steps into employment. The University of Würzburg also generates data from central student and lecturer surveys. If required, the faculties have access to a set of instruments for in-depth workload assessment as well as for evaluation at the module level.

The [evaluation regulations](#) (only available in German) form the basis for all surveys conducted.

Annual Review

The university board as well as the respective faculty boards once a year perform a joint review of the situation in study and teaching at a faculty. The focus is on the respective experiences, concerns and developments of a faculty and its study programmes. With the help of a result protocol, the deduction and implementation of measures as well as the responsibilities are bindingly set and transparently documented.

Programme Audit

Within a cycle of eight years, each study programme undergoes the programme audit once. The centrepiece of the procedure is the assessment by a group of experts consisting of external representatives from the respective science, professional practice, and students. The involvement of external expertise serves to ensure compliance with accreditation criteria and to identify opportunities for the further development of study programs.