

Mission Statement

of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany (AKAST)

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany (AKAST) is dedicated to assuring and developing the quality of academic teaching and learning within Catholic theology as well as to enhancing the development of the European Higher Education Area. It particularly cooperates with the Accreditation Council as well as with the Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione della Qualità delle Facoltà Ecclesiastiche (AVEPRO) and the Holy See.

The Accreditation Council's „Criteria for the Accreditation of Degree Programmes” form the central set of rules for the accreditation procedure. They are implemented in accordance with the current version. This also applies for the “General Rules for Carrying out Procedures for the Accreditation and Reaccreditation of Study Programmes”.

The accreditation is designed to facilitate the national, international and ecclesiastical certification of canonical study programmes and degrees. Simultaneously it aims at providing orientation for universities, students, employers, and responsible Church authorities towards the quality of programmes and their correspondence with the relevant ecclesiastical guidelines according to the “Key Points for the Structure of Studies in Study Courses involving Catholic and Protestant Theology/Religion” amended by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) December 13th, 2007.

AKAST is devoted to the principles of academic freedom and the self-government of Higher Education Institutions. It therefore leaves the basic responsibility for quality assurance in the hands of the Higher Education Institutions and individual faculties. The goals which the Higher Education Institutions have determined for themselves within the framework of individual overriding strategies, as well as relevant national and international standards are the determining factors of quality assurance. The object of review is the validity of both study goal and study design, considering the possibility of goal accomplishment. This concept of quality is carried out in an expert-based procedure involving professors, practitioners of the profession, and students all of which participate independently and impartially. The various steps are documented in our “Guidelines for the Accreditation of Study Programmes”. The procedure, based on scientific standards, looks for quality and competence while giving the Higher Education Institutions the opportunity to define focal points and to cultivate their own academic profile vis-à-vis other institutions. The liberty to cultivate a competitive profile is crucial to academic diversity in theology and in the neighbouring disciplines (philosophy, canon law studies etc.) as well as to the maintenance of high academic standards.

AKAST's fields of activity include:

- The accreditation of canonical study programmes
- Organization and carrying out of information events for designated experts, Church authorities involved in accreditation procedures, and representatives of Institutions of Higher Education
- Providing contacts and enhancing cooperation, projects and events with German and international partners
- Information and publications