Agency for Quality Assurance
and Accreditation of Canonical
Programmes of Studies e.V.

# Statutes

## of the association "Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of canonical programmes of studies in Germany e. V. – AKAST" in the version of 22 January 2026

### § 1 Name, Legal Status, Seat, Financial Year

1. The association is called "Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of canonical programmes of studies in Germany e. V. – AKAST". It is registered in the register of associations of the district court Bonn under the number VR 8946.
2. The German Bishops' Conference established the association with resolution of their plenary meeting on the 22nd to 25th September 2008 – with the consent of the Holy See – as a public association with legal responsibility as regards canon law according to cc. 116, 301 § 3 und 312 of the Code of Canon Law (CIC).
3. The seat of the association is Bonn.
4. The financial year corresponds to the calendar year.

### § 2 Purpose of the association

1. The purpose of the association is the promotion of the Faculties and other Institutes of Catholic Theology and the quality assurance of the canonical programmes of studies in accordance with the universal ecclesiastical Higher Education Law in its currently valid version and its national application within the framework of the process directed towards the development of a European Higher Education Area, in which the Holy See also participates.
2. In particular the association intends to carry out through its Accreditation Committee
   - peer review process of canonical study programmes especially the study programmes Catholic Theology (full study programmes) and non-canonical study programmes with Catholic Theology, which are covered by the Interstate Treaty and
   - quality assurance and quality development procedures, including assessment and evaluation of canonical study programmes, which are not covered by the Interstate Treaty, and to award the AKAST e.V. quality seal.
3. In collaboration with the Holy See and its "Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione della Qualità delle Facoltà Ecclesiastiche (AVEPRO)" it fulfils the task of
   - review and preparation of the accreditation report and consent to the resolution and review recommendation of canonical study programmes contained therein to the Accreditation Council Foundation, in particular the study programmes Catholic Theology (full study programmes), and non-canonical study programmes with Catholic Theology according to the Interstate Treaty and „Eckpunkte für die Studienstruktur in Studiengängen mit Katholischer oder Evangelischer Theologie/Religion" [= Key Points for the Structure of Studies in Study Courses Involving Catholic or Protestant Theology/Religion] of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, of 13 December 2007, no. 8 and

- carrying out quality assurance and quality development procedures of canonical study programmes, which are not covered by the Interstate Treaty.

4. The work of the association is based on requirements under the body of law governing relations between the state and the churches including the relevant canonical regulations named in the Concordats and other treaties between Church and State.

   All regulations of

   - ecclesiastical labor law, in particular the Basic Regulations of Church Service,
   - regarding the handling of sexual, physical, and psychological violence, especially the "Regulation for dealing with sexual abuse of minors and of vulnerable adults by clergy and other church staff" (Intervention Regulations) as well as the Prevention Regulations,
   - ecclesiastical data protection, especially the Ecclesiastical Data Protection Act (KDG) and the Implementing Regulation for the KDG of the Archdiocese of Cologne,

   apply as amended from time to time.

5. The association collaborates with other accreditation agencies.

6. The association pursues exclusively and directly aims of public benefit in accordance with the paragraph "Steuerbegünstigte Zwecke" [= tax-deductible purposes] of the "Abgabenordnung" [= German tax law]. The association is a non-profit-making organization; it does not primarily pursue self-interest financial objectives. The resources of the association may be used only for purposes in accordance with the statutes. The members will receive no contributions from the resources of the association. Nobody may draw advantage from expenditure which is not in accordance with the aims of the association or remuneration which exceeds usual standards.

## § 3 Membership

1. The members of the association are natural persons who are members of the Catholic Church or legal entities, primarily theological universities and facilities, which apply for admission. The General Meeting decides on admission. The German Bishops' Conference shall be informed of the decision in writing.

2. Ex officio members of the association are:

   - Katholisch-Theologischer Fakultätentag [= the assembly of the Faculties and Institutes of Catholic Theology in Germany] (six representatives: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the four members of the council of the Katholisch-Theologischer Fakultätentag, for the duration of their term of office),
   - the Chairperson of the association of the workgroups of Catholic Theology, for the duration of his or her term of office,
   - two representatives of the German (arch-)dioceses, to be appointed by the German Bishops' Conference,

3. Renewal of membership (in the case of natural persons) is required after five years.

4. Membership ends with the end of the work period, through death or dissolution of the legal entity, in addition through a written notice of resignation presented by the member to the Executive Board, a statement made by the competent Church authority that the conditions mentioned in c. 316 CIC exist or with expulsion - except ex officio members mentioned under 2. - pronounced by the General Meeting on important reasons. The member is to be heard in the General Meeting as regards the accusations which have been brought.

5. The members are not requested to pay fees or other payments.

## § 4 Organs

The association has the following organs:

1. the Executive Board
2. the General Meeting

## § 5 Executive Board

1. The Executive Board is composed of the Chairperson, the First Vice Chairperson and the Second Vice Chairperson.

   The Chairperson is to be a professor or retired professor of a faculty of Catholic theology or institute of Catholic theology or Catholic religion at a university. The Chairperson is also a member of both the Accreditation Committee and the Advisory Board.

   In accordance with c. 317, § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (CIC), the Chairperson has to be confirmed by the German Bishops' Conference.

2. In order to represent the association legally according to § 26, 2 of the German Code of Civil Law, it is required that two members of the Executive Board act jointly.

3. The Executive Board meets when required, but at least twice a year. As a rule, a meeting is convoked 14 days in advance by the Chairperson – or in the event of the Chairperson´s absence by the first Vice Chairperson –, together with details of the proposed agenda.

   When convoked according to the regulations, the Executive Board is quorate when at least two members of the Executive Board are present. The Executive Board takes its decisions with the majority of those present. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson – or if the Chairperson is unavailable the First Vice Chairperson – has the casting vote. A representative appointed by the Commission for Science and Arts (VIII) of the German Bishops' Conference attends the meetings in an advisory capacity.

   A minute of the meetings is to be recorded; they are to be signed by one member of the Executive Board.

4. The Executive Board is elected by the General Meeting for a term of 3 years. It remains in office until the next election. Block election is allowed.

5. The Executive Board manages the day-to-day business of the association within the framework of the resolutions of the General Meeting. The Executive Board reports to the General Meeting; it presents the budget and the balance for the year.

## § 6 General Meeting

1. The General Meeting is to be convoked at least once a year by the Chairperson – or if the Chairperson is unavailable by the First Vice Chairperson. The written invitation is to be sent out 30 days in advance together with the proposed agenda. Petitions for changes of the statutes or dissolution of the association have to be enclosed verbatim with the invitation.

2. The Executive Board is entitled to convoke an extraordinary General Meeting whenever it considers it necessary. It is obliged to do so when one third of the members request it.

3. The General Meeting is quorate when at least half of the members are present.

   If this quorum is not reached, the Executive Board can – except for the case mentioned in § 10, passage 1 – convoke a new General Meeting with the same agenda 14 days in advance; a quorum is not required for the new meeting.

   The Executive Board may invite guests who attend the General Meeting in an advisory capacity. The representative of the Commission for Science and Arts (VIII) of the German Bishops' Conference takes part in the General Meeting in an advisory capacity.

4. The General Meeting takes its decisions with the majority of the votes of those present.

In the event of a tie, the Chairperson – or if the Chairperson is unavailable the First Vice Chairperson – has the casting vote. The preceding sentence does not apply to decisions according to § 6, passage 5, dash points 2. and 3.

Resolutions regarding a change in the statutes or a dissolution of the association require a majority of ¾ of those members who are present and entitled to vote; in addition they require the approval of the German Bishops' Conference.

5. In particular, the General Meeting has these tasks:
   - decisions on the guidelines for the implementation of the aims of the association,
   - decisions on the budget and the balance of the year,
   - acceptance of the auditor´s report and approval of the actions of the Executive Board,
   - acceptance of the Administrator´s report,
   - election of the Executive Board,
   - election of those members of the Accreditation Committee who are not members ex officio; and acceptance of their report,
   - election of the Advisory Board,
   - election of the Complaints Committee
   - decisions on changes in the statutes and the dissolution of the association.
6. A minute of the meetings is to be recorded, it is to be signed by one member of the Executive Board and one other member.

## § 7 Accreditation Committee

1. For carrying out
   - peer review procedures of canonical study programmes, especially the study programmes Catholic Theology (full study programmes) and non-canonical study programmes with Catholic Theology, which are covered by the Interstate Treaty and
   - of quality assurance and quality development procedures of canonical study programmes, which are not covered by the Interstate Treaty

   the association establishes an Accreditation Committee.

   The Accreditation Committee determines the results of the peer review process and approves the accreditation report and the review recommendation contained therein to the Accreditation Council Foundation. In quality assurance and quality development procedures the Accreditation Committee takes the decision on accreditation.
2. The Accreditation Committee consists of the following members:
   - the Chairperson according to § 5, passage 1,
   - four professors (one of whom should be from abroad, if possible),
   - for the event of unavailability 2 professors as substitute members,
   - one expert in quality assurance and accreditation matters,
   - two persons of professional practice, of whom one is rector of a seminary,
   - one student member,
   - for the event of unavailability 1 substitute student member
   - the episcopal commissioner of the German Bishops' Conference (advisory)

   The Accreditation Committee elects one of the professors from among its members as

Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson.

It is possible to invite guests with an advisory vote to the meetings.

3. The members are elected in behavior of the Katholisch-Theologischer Fakultätentag the Associations of Faculties of Catholic Theology, the association of the workgroups of Catholic Theology, the German Seminary Rectors´ Conference and the Association of Theology Students (AGT).

   The student member and the student substitute member are elected for a term of two years. All other members are elected for a term of five years.

   The German Bishops' Conference shall be informed of the decision in writing. The members may be reelected.

   The General Meeting is entitled to revoke election of a member of the committee on important reasons.

4. The following criteria apply for election:

   - academic qualification in the subject,
   - representation of the four fields of theology,
   - representation of faculties maintained by the State and by the Church,
   - experience with the Bologna process,
   - in addition competence for the training of teachers.

5. The Accreditation Committee appoints

   - the review panels for the assessment of the study programmes according to the Interstate Treaty,
   - the review panels and decides on the guidelines for the implementation of quality assurance and quality development procedures, including assessment and evaluation.

6. The Accreditation Committee is quorate when more than half of its members are in attendance, including the Chairperson, respectively in event of his or her absence the Vice Chairperson. Resolutions are passed by a majority of the votes of those present and a majority of the professorial members.

   In the event of a tie, the Chairperson of the Accreditation Committee, or if the Chairperson is unavailable the Vice Chairperson, has the casting vote.

   In peer review process pursuant to the Interstate Treaty, the determination of the assessments result and the approval of the accreditation report and the resolution and assessment recommendation to the Accreditation Council contained therein require the approval of the episcopal representative of the German Bishops' Conference.

## § 8 Complaints Committee

1. To ensure an orderly and independent complaints procedure for objections by the contractual partners of AKAST and against decisions of the Accreditation Commission, the Association shall establish a Complaints Committee.
2. The Complaints Committee shall consist of the following members:
   - two academics representing different types of theological higher education institutions,
   - one representative of professional practice,
   - one student member
   - one representative of an accreditation agency.
3. Further details are governed by the Complaints and Appeals Regulations.

## § 9 Advisory Board

1. The Advisory Board monitors the quality of AKAST's work and gives impulse in an advisory capacity.
2. The members of the Advisory Board are:
   - the Chairperson according to § 5 passage 1,
   - 4 experts in quality assurance and accreditation matters,

   The Advisory Board shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson form among its members.
3. The Chairperson is entitled to convoke the meetings and to direct them.
4. It is possible to invite guests with an advisory vote to the meetings.
5. The members are elected by the General Meeting for a term of 5 years. Reelection is permitted. A revocation by the General Meeting for important reasons is possible.
6. The Advisory Board is quorate when more than half of its members, including the Chairperson, or in the event of the Chairperson's absence the Vice Chairperson, are in attendance. Resolutions are passed by a majority of those present. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

## § 10 Office

1. In accordance with the statutes and the decisions of the General Meeting and the Executive Board the administrator runs the office and manages the day-to-day business. Details are regulated by the standing orders passed by the Executive Board and approved by the General Meeting. The Administrator prepares and implements the resolutions of the Executive Board, the General Meeting and the Accreditation Committee. He/She takes part in the meetings with an advisory vote. The Administrator is appointed by the Executive Board.
2. Under the direction of the Administrator the office is responsible for the execution of the tasks which have been entrusted to it. The office staff is selected by the Executive Board, on basis of a personnel plan adopted by the General Meeting.
3. On basis of an agreement of cooperation adopted by the General Meeting, the office may cooperate with another accreditation agency for the practical implementation of procedures of accreditation.

## § 11 Dissolution of the association and subsequent use of its accrued assets

1. Apart from the case mentioned in c. 320 CIC the association is dissolved with a resolution of the General Meeting, whereby ¾ of those who are entitled to vote and are in attendance must vote for dissolution.
2. If the association is dissolved or if its aims with non-tax-deductible purposes no longer apply, assets of the association pass to the Verband der Diözesen Deutschlands [= the civil juridical corporation of the German Bishops' Conference], which is to use them directly and exclusively for the promotion of the Faculties and Institutes of Catholic Theology and for the quality assurance of canonical programmes of studies. The records pass to the diocese in which the association was seated.

## § 12 Ecclesiastic supervision

1. The association is subject to the supervision of the German Bishops' Conference according to canon law (cc. 305, 312–320 CIC).
2. Decisions on changes in the statutes or dissolution of the association require the approval of the German Bishops' Conference in order to have effect.
3. The association orders an auditor and sends a copy of the auditor´s report to the Verband der Diözesen Deutschlands. The Verband der Diözesen Deutschlands is entitled to examine the documents and to request further information at any time.

## § 13 Coming into force of the statutes

The statutes come into force when they have been adopted by the General Meeting, have received the approval of the German Bishops' Conference and have been registered in the register of associations. The statute was last changed on 22 January 2026.

Ingolstadt, 22 January 2026