

A joint accreditation by AQAS e.V. and the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC) (Link zu HETAC)

In 2006 the Hochschule Darmstadt (Link zur Hochschule) approached AQAS to accredit a multimedia programme that they had offered jointly with Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) (Link zum CIT), Ireland, for some years. The programme had already been accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) but had not been adapted to the two-cycle bachelor's / master's structure required by the Bologna process. As the new programme needed an accreditation in Germany as well as in Ireland HETAC and AQAS got together to explore the possibilities of a joint accreditation that would ease the process for both higher education institutions involved.

HETAC and AQAS checked their procedures and guidelines for similarities and differences. The similarities greatly outweighed the differences and on this basis the accreditation agencies developed guidelines specifically adapted to the needs of the accreditation process. There was some concern at the beginning of the process that the national qualification frameworks of the two countries would pose problems because the Irish qualification framework is more detailed than the German Qualifikationsrahmen für deutsche Studienabschlüsse. However, both frameworks proved to be open enough for a joint accreditation.

After the accreditation documents had been submitted by Hochschule Darmstadt and CIT AQAS and HETAC jointly nominated an Irish-German panel of experts. Together with the two institutions AQAS and HETAC decided that the panel would meet representatives of the programme from Cork and Darmstadt at the Hochschule Darmstadt. After that the chairman of the panel together with representatives of the two agencies would visit Cork Institute of Technology to have a look at the physical resources and to talk to the rector of CIT.

The panel of experts received a favourable impression of the programme and its organization and they recommended an accreditation to the accreditation commission of AQAS and the Council of HETAC. A report was submitted to both agencies and the respective decision-making bodies independently decided on an accreditation (Link zu Kurzbericht).