

*Drs. AR XX/XXXX*

**External review report in the context of the Focused Review  
on the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of  
Studies in Germany e.V. (AKAST)**

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- presented on 31/08/2021 -

**I. Executive summary**

The review panel gained a very positive impression of the development of AKAST since the reaccreditation in 2018, in particular with regard to the three standards of the *Standards and*  
10 *Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) to be examined.

The changes made in the Statutes manifest the Agency's independence and responsibility for its own quality assurance procedures in accordance with Standard ESG 3.3.

Despite the pressures of the corona pandemic, AKAST has developed new initiatives for internal analyses in line with Standard ESG 3.4.  
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AKAST has revised its internal complaints procedure and installed a complaints committee so that Standard 2.7 is taken into account.

The review panel concludes that all standards 3.3, 3.4 and 2.7 reviewed in the Focused Review are fulfilled.  
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**II. Procedural framework**

AKAST first applied for inclusion in EQAR on 17/06/2019. AKAST's application was based on the external expert report, on the basis of which the renewed reaccreditation and approval (pursuant to Section 24 (1) sentence 2, Specimen decree) of AKAST in Germany until  
25 31/12/2023 was successfully completed by the Accreditation Council on 06/12/2018. Within this framework, the Accreditation Council came to the conclusion that all standards of the ESG were in full or in substantial compliance <sup>1</sup>. This assessment was not agreed with in all respects by EQAR's *Register Committee* in its decision dated 12/11/2019. In particular, the *Register*

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<sup>1</sup> The following ten standards were in full compliance according to the evaluation of the review panel: 3.1,3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7. The following three standards were in substantial compliance according to the evaluation of the panel: 3.3, 3.4, 3.6. (See External Review Report on reaccreditation dated 09/11/2018, p. 51.)

Committee found that Standard 3.3 (*Independence*) was non-compliance. Related to Standards 2.7 (*Complaints and Appeals*) and 3.4 (*Thematic Analysis*), the Register Committee found only partial compliance.

5 By decision of the *Register Committee* dated 12/11/2019, the application was deferred and AKAST was given an opportunity to comment and submit further information or documentation for review pursuant to § 3.10 of the EQAR Procedural Rules.

Taking into account statements submitted by AKAST on 20/01/2020 and 10/02/2020, the application was denied by decision of the *Register Committee* on 22/06/2020.

10 With the rejection, AKAST was granted the right to undergo a so-called *Focused Review*, in which above all Standard 3.3 can be re-examined, since the non-compliance certified here precludes inclusion in EQAR.

On the basis of an amended statute and further revised documents, AKAST would like to re-apply for membership in EQAR via a so-called *Focused Review* coordinated by the Foundation Accreditation Council. AKAST asked the Foundation Accreditation Council to coordinate this  
15 *Focused Review*. In the *Terms of Reference*, it was agreed that in addition to Standard 3.3 (*Independence*), Standards 3.4 (*Thematic Analysis*) and 2.7 (*Complaints and appeals*) would also be evaluated.

## II.1 Review Process

20 AKAST submitted self-assessment with attachments for *Focused Review* by electronic mail on 05/10/2021. Upon request, additional documents were submitted electronically on 08/06/2021 and 10/06/2021.

The Executive Board of the Accreditation Council Foundation has appointed the following experts by resolution of 19/04/2021:

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- Prof. Dr. Sigrid Müller, Chair of Theological Ethics at the Institute for Systematic Theology and Ethics, University of Vienna (Chair)
  - Lucas Dinter, doctoral student at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (student representative)
  - Prof. Dr. Reinhold R. Grimm, former Chairman of the Accreditation Council

30 On the part of the office of the Foundation Accreditation Council, the review panel was supported by Agnes Leinweber.

A virtual panel briefing took place on 09/06/2021, during which the *Focused Review* procedure

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was presented and the submitted documents were analysed. In addition, the briefing also served to deepen the knowledge of the understanding of the role of reviewers in this procedure.

### **Self-assessment**

- 5 The self-assessment report is meaningful and focused on the essential points. The Agency has also submitted or subsequently submitted the required supporting documents.

### **Online interview with the agency**

- 10 On 10/06/2021, two conversations with members of organs and bodies of the agency took place via video conference. The review panel interviewed the Agency's management, representatives of the German Bishops' Conference, members of the Agency's Accreditation Committee, Head Office staff and members of the Complaints Committee. The schedule is attached as an appendix.

- 15 The review panel submitted the attached review report dated 31/08/2021, taking into account the statement of AKASt dated 27/08/2021, with a unanimous vote.

This report is based on the May 2015 *ESG*.

### III. Compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

For the purposes of the *Focused Review*, the following report only assesses compliance with ESG Standards 2.7, 3.3 and 3.4 (see Section II Procedural Basis).

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#### 3.3 Independence

##### STANDARD:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

##### GUIDELINES:

Autonomous institutions need independent agencies as counterparts.

In considering the independence of an agency the following are important:

- Organisational independence, demonstrated by official documentation (e.g. instruments of government, legislative acts or statutes of the organisation) that stipulates the independence of the agency's work from third parties, such as higher education institutions, governments and other stakeholder organisations;
- Operational independence: the definition and operation of the agency's procedures and methods as well as the nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken independently from third parties such as higher education institutions, governments and other stakeholders;
- Independence of formal outcomes: while experts from relevant stakeholder backgrounds, particularly students, take part in quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

Anyone contributing to external quality assurance activities of an agency (e.g. as expert) is informed that while they may be nominated by a third party, they are acting in a personal capacity and not representing their constituent organisations when working for the agency. Independence is important to ensure that any procedures and decisions are solely based on expertise.

#### Evidence

10 In 2018, AKAST explained on p. 14 of the self-assessment that the agency, as an entity of higher education institutions established by theological faculties, schools of philosophy and theology, representatives of the Association of Faculties of Catholic Theology (*KThF*) and the associations of theological disciplines (*theologische Arbeitsgemeinschaften*), AKAST is free from state influence. In accordance with the Key Points, AKAST exercises sovereign rights of the Church and, under canon law, is subject to the vigilance of the German Bishops' Conference (CIC, cc. 305 and 312–320).

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According to the previous Agency's Statutes, the German Bishops' Conference has the following scope for influencing AKAST's decisions:

- section 3 (1): Consent for the admission of members to the association;
- 5     • section 5 (1): Confirmation of the individual assuming the office of Chairperson of the Executive Board, the Accreditation Committee and the Advisory Board;
- section 6 (4): Approval of General Meeting resolutions regarding amendments to the Statutes or dissolution of the association;
- section 7 (3): Consent for the nomination of members of the Accreditation Committee; and
- 10    • Section 7 (6): Approval of each accreditation decision.

Under Section 5 (3), a representative appointed by the Commission for Science and Arts (VIII) of the German Bishops' Conference attends the Executive Board meetings in an advisory capacity. Accordingly, a member of the Commission for Science and Culture (Commission VIII) of the German Bishops' Conference was represented in the Accreditation Committee (Section 15 7 (2) of the Statutes). The statutes do not provide for participation in the appointment of reviewers to the Accreditation Committee.

In the review report in 2018, the review panel came to the conclusion that Standard 3.3 was substantial compliance. AKAST is an independently operating agency. However, the construction as a public association under canon law, which is also reflected in the statutes, results in 20 some possibilities for the German Bishops' Conference to exert influence, although AKAST has its own legal personality. The review panel also referred to the German Bishops' Conference's reservation of consent, which resulted from no. 8 of the Key Points and § 25 no. 1 sentence 5 of the Specimen decree. According to this, partial theological or single-subject theological study programmes could only be accredited with the approval of the church. Whereas 25 other agencies ensured this through the participation of a person appointed by the Church in the assessment and their evaluation, at AKAST this reserved approval was delegated to the representative of the Bishops' Conference in the Accreditation Committee.

However, due to this interlinkage, the *Register Committee* found by decision of 30/11/2019 that AKAST does not comply with ESG 3.3. In particular, the fact that every accreditation 30 decision requires the approval of the German Bishops' Conference representative in the Accreditation Committee could not be seen in line with ESG 3.3. According to the understanding of the ESG, the responsibility for the final results of the quality assurance processes must remain the responsibility of the quality assurance agency. The decision goes on to state that the accreditation decision by AKAST and the ecclesiastical approval required under canon law are 35 the purview of two different entities and should therefore be considered independently of each

other.

In statements dated 20/01/2020 and 10/02/2020 AKAST informed that the AKAST Executive Board had submitted a proposal to the General Meeting to amend the Statutes, changing the role of the representative delegated by Commission VIII of the German Bishops' Conference  
5 from a full member to a consultative member without voting rights. It was also planned to review the various rights of approval of the German Bishops' Conference with regard to membership of AKAST and the Accreditation Committee and to discuss this at its General Meeting.

In its decision of 22/06/2020, the *Register Committee* welcomed the planned statutory changes. As the amended Statutes have not yet entered into force at the time of the *Register*  
10 *Committee's* decision, it maintained that non-compliance with ESG 3.3.

Together with the self-assessment, AKAST submitted in 2021 the statutes revised and adopted in accordance with the announcement (Annex 2) as well as a synopsis for comparison with the previous statutes (Annex 9). The statutes were adopted by the General Meeting on  
15 28/01/2021, the agreement with the German Bishops' Conference was established at the Spring Plenary Assembly 2021 and published on the agency's website.<sup>2</sup> The corresponding entries in the register of associations 8946 were made on 22/07/2021 and 30/07/2021 at the Bonn Local Court.

In the new statutes, AKAST makes several changes, for example, it speaks of "quality assurance and quality development procedures" instead of programme accreditation in order to re-  
20 flect the whole field of activity.

In § 7 the previous membership in the Accreditation Committee of a person on the part of the German Bishops' Conference is transformed into an advisory function of an episcopal commissioner. This is to make clear - as demanded by EQAR - also for the public that there are two different responsibilities, which are considered independently of each other

In its self-assessment 2021 on p. 13, AKAST refers to the legal basis applicable in Germany  
25 since 2018 and the new division of tasks between accreditation agencies and the Accreditation Council. The accreditation agencies carry out the assessment and, together with an expert panel appointed by them, draw up an accreditation report including a recommendation for a decision, on the basis of which the Accreditation Council makes a final accreditation decision  
30 (justification to § 24 para. 1, Specimen decree). With the transmission of the accreditation report to the higher education institution, the assessment procedure agreed between agency and higher education institution is concluded. For assessment procedures of regulated study

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<sup>2</sup>See <https://www.akast.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AKAST-Satzung-2021final.pdf> retrieved 02/06/2021.

programmes, which also include partial theological or single-subject theological study programmes, the approval of the competent ecclesiastical body is to be obtained (according to § 24 para. 3 sentence 1 and § 25 para. 1 sentence 5, Specimen decree ) for the formal report and for the review report, which together form the accreditation report. The approval (or non-approval) according to § 22 para. 5 sentence 2 Specimen decree is to be documented in the accreditation report. Without submission of the ecclesiastical approval, a decision of the Accreditation Council cannot be made legally effective.

The ecclesiastical approval of the resolution recommendations of the Accreditation Committee, which is necessary according to § 25 number 1 sentence 5 of the Specimen decree, is now granted in a separate step, on the basis of the revised statutes (section 7 (7) of the statutes). In the discussion with members of the Accreditation Committee, the review panel learns that also in practice the ecclesiastical approval is granted separately from the determination of the evaluation result of the Accreditation Committee. Often, for scheduling reasons, the episcopal commissioner is not present at the meetings of the Accreditation Committee and gives his approval by electronic mail. If he is present in person, he gives his approval separately, i.e. separately from the decision of the Accreditation Committee. In the minutes, both decisions are documented separately, as well as in the accreditation reports under Chapter III.1 "General Information".<sup>3</sup>In addition, the episcopal commissioner explained that he understands his role above all in advising the Accreditation Committee on internal legal questions.

The synopsis presented (Annex 9) also shows changes with regard to the previous practice of reaching agreement with the German Bishops' Conference:

- According to Section 3 (1) of the statutes, decisions on the admission of members to the association AKAST e.V. are only to be made known to the German Bishops' Conference. // The German Bishops' Conference shall be informed of the decision in writing.
- Pursuant to Section 7 (3) of the statutes, consultation with the German Bishops' Conference is no longer required for the election of the members of the Accreditation Committee, but only the result is announced. // The German Bishops' Conference shall be informed of the decision in writing. The members may be reelected.//

AKAST states in its self-assessment 2021 on p. 14 that this is without prejudice to the position

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.akast.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Akk.bericht-KThFM%C3%BCnchen-042020.pdf> (retrieved 08/31/2021) The accreditation reports of the procedures carried out by AKAST in winter semester 2020/21 are pending decision by the Accreditation Council and are therefore not yet published.

of the German Bishops' Conference as the competent ecclesiastical authority according to c. 312 §1, 2° CIC/1983 for AKAST as a public association under canon law. It can be seen from the synopsis of the statutes (Annex 9) that, in accordance with § 5, para. 1, the German Bishops' Conference continues to confirm the person who chairs the Executive Board, the Accreditation Committee and the Advisory Board. Likewise, according to § 6 Para. 4, the resolutions of the General Meeting on amendments to the statutes or dissolution of the association require the approval of the German Bishops' Conference.

## Analysis

The changes made to the statutes now also legally reflect AKAST's operational independence as certified in the 2018 reaccreditation. This is very much welcomed by the review panel. In particular, the separation of ecclesiastical approval by the advisory member of the Accreditation Committee on the one hand and accreditation decision on the other ensures the full responsibility of AKAST for the results of its own quality assurance procedures, except for the programme accreditation of new law. Here, the Accreditation Council makes the decisions - according to the Interstate Treaty; this applies not only to AKAST, but to all agencies active in Germany.

In conversation with members of the Accreditation Committee, the review panel perceives a great sensitivity on the part of the episcopal commissioner to his advisory role. The other members expressly welcome the possibility of being able to discuss questions about internal church regulations or professional fields with the episcopal commissioner in the meeting, if necessary, since the study programmes dealt with by AKAST open up access to professional fields which are partly regulated within the church, such as the priesthood. In the appointment of the experts by the Accreditation Committee, the episcopal commissioner does not exercise any influence - as provided for in the statutes - even in practice.

According to the impression of the review panel, it is clear to all those involved how in practice church approval is granted. For outsiders, however, the process could be elaborated and documented more transparently in the agency's documents, for example by providing information on the website. The review panel welcomes that the agency presents a slightly revised flow chart for the programme accreditation with the statement.

The review panel notes that all other links between the German Bishops' Conference and AKAST - which are not prescribed by internal canon law - have also been resolved.

The approval reservations of the German Bishops' Conference in the appointment of the chairperson or in resolutions to amend the statutes or dissolve result from the ecclesiastical law on



associations and thus correspond to the legal framework conditions. They have no influence on the independent responsibility of AKAST for its own quality assurance procedures.

**Panel conclusions:**

**5 Compliance with Standard 3.3.**

### 3.4 Thematic analysis

#### STANDARD:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

#### GUIDELINES:

In the course of their work, agencies gain information on programmes and institutions that can be useful beyond the scope of a single process, providing material for structured analyses across the higher education system. These findings can contribute to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in institutional, national and international contexts.

A thorough and careful analysis of this information will show developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.

#### Evidence

In the reaccreditation process in 2018, AKAST referred in the self-assessment on p. 16 to a discursive approach of the agency to feedback experiences and results in the field of Catholic  
5 theology. Thus, AKAST presented its own experiences in various forms, e.g. by participating in working groups, offering workshop discussions, through informational interviews, presentations, and through regular reports (Self-assessment 2018 p. 16).

As an example of participation in working groups, AKAST reported in the 2018 self-assessment p. 16 on the agency's participation in evaluation of guidelines on the recognition of study and  
10 examination credits in modular single-subject Catholic theology degree programmes. Likewise, AKAST was involved in the evaluation of the Key Points and of the "Ecclesiastical Requirements". Furthermore, AKAST reported regularly to the German Bishops' Conference, especially to the Commission for Science and Culture (Commission VIII) and semi-annually to the Congregation for Catholic Education and AVEPRO.

15 In 2018, the Accreditation Council and Review Panel concluded that the requirement of ESG Standard 3.4 was substantially in compliance. They recommended that the agency pay more attention to documenting such outcomes for the public.

By decision dated 05/11/2019, the Register Committee acknowledged that AKAST presents analyses of its own work at meetings, working groups, and other event formats, and further  
20 notes that only occasional written analyses have been presented to date. Therefore, the standard is only in partial compliance.

In the new self-assessment 2021, the agency states on p. 15 that AKAST has currently conducted four assessments in accordance with the new law. As soon as AKAST has sufficient data material, it will be evaluated and the results published. AKAST also plans to conduct a  
25 student survey on the topic of "corona studies and digital teaching" during the next federal

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general meeting of the Association of Theology Students (AGT) in the summer semester of 2021 and to publish the results appropriately. Upon request, AKAST submitted the questionnaire for this purpose. With the statement, AKAST points out that a preliminary evaluation of the student survey can now be viewed on the AKAST website <sup>4</sup>.

- 5 Likewise, in 2021, AKAST will contribute experiences from its own procedures to the corresponding working group and the report of the German Bishops' Conference during the third evaluation of the Key Points (Self-assessment 2021 p. 15). In a separate section on the website, AKAST publishes presentations and reports of its own event format "Workshop Interview", which is primarily aimed at students. <sup>5</sup>
- 10 In a discussion with the review panel, AKAST explained that it was planned to make its own archive of procedural documents available for (student) research work. Here, however, the corona pandemic had made concrete planning difficult.

### **Analysis**

- 15 The Review Group is aware that in 2019, the Register Committee understood the activities demonstrated by the Agency up to that point to be less than "thematic analyses". The review panel explicitly takes note of this view.

As already noted in the 2018 reaccreditation, AKAST reliably contributes the experience gained from its own quality assurance procedures to the regular evaluation of the Key Points and the consultation of the German Bishops' Conference and performs an important function here in the sector of Catholic theology. The review panel understands that AKAST would first like to carry out an appropriate number of programme accreditation procedures under new law in order to evaluate their results in the sense of ESG 3.4.

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In the opinion of the review panel, the newly established events section on the website after 2019 with the documentation of results and the currently ongoing student survey represent analyses in their own field in accordance with ESG 3.4, which have been developed since the reaccreditation in 2018. This engagement is particularly positive in light of the fact that the corona pandemic, with its conversion of agency-owned processes to digital, was challenging for a small office like AKAST. As the Register Committee uses previously published analyses as a benchmark, the review panel notes partial fulfilment.

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<sup>4</sup> See [AKAST-Student Survey-SoSe-2021-digital-teaching.pdf](#) (retrieved Aug. 31, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.akast.info/akast/ueber-akast/veranstaltungen-archiv/> (retrieved 6/22/2021).

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The review panel suggests that AKASt could additionally develop smaller report formats such as "spotlights" or current problems concerning the study programmes of Catholic theology, which could be made available, for example, to the experts in preparation for procedures. These would not have to be decidedly scientific elaborations.

5 **Panel conclusions:**

**Partial compliance with Standard 3.4.**

## 2.7 Complaints and appeals

### STANDARD:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

### GUIDELINES:

In order to safeguard the rights of the institutions and ensure fair decision-making, external quality assurance is operated in an open and accountable way. Nevertheless, there may be misapprehensions or instances of dissatisfaction about the process or formal outcomes.

Institutions need to have access to processes that allow them to raise issues of concern with the agency; the agencies, need to handle such issues in a professional way by means of a clearly defined process that is consistently applied.

A complaints procedure allows an institution to state its dissatisfaction about the conduct of the process or those carrying it out.

In an appeals procedure, the institution questions the formal outcomes of the process, where it can demonstrate that the outcome is not based on sound evidence, that criteria have not been correctly applied or that the processes have not been consistently implemented.

### Evidence

- 5 In the 2018 reaccreditation process, AKAST submitted a set of Complaints Regulations published on its website that governs possible complaints subjects and the procedure. The individual contract with the higher education institution also referred to the possibility of a complaints procedure. Higher education institutions or faculties were able to lodge a complaint in writing against measures, resolutions and decisions of the Accreditation Committee or the review panel within two weeks of becoming aware of them, stating the grounds for the complaint.
- 10 The complaints were examined and decided on individually by the Executive Board or the Accreditation Committee. If the complaint was substantiated, it was remedied. Documentation and archiving took place in the meeting minutes and the procedure folders (Self-assessment 2018, p. 31). The Accreditation Council and the review panel assessed Standard 2.7 as fulfilled.
- 15 AKAST's 2021 self-assessment states the following regarding communication with EQAR: In a decision dated 05.11.2019, the *Register Committee notes* that AKAST's Complaints Regulations (as amended on 26/01/2014) do not define separate processes for complaints ("*complaints*") and appeals ("*appeals*"), that AKAST's Complaints Regulations do not cover all business areas and that the current rules do not ensure an impartial process in AKAST's handling
- 20 of appeals. The *Register Committee concludes that* AKAST only partial-compliance with ESG 2.7.

Now AKAST presents a revised "Complaints and Appeals Regulations" in Annex 3, which is

already published on the website. Compared to the version that was available at the time of reaccreditation in 2018, the following changes can be noted:

- In section 1 of the "Complaints and Appeals Regulations", the terms "complaint" and "appeals" are defined, whereby the "complaint refers to the procedure at AKAST and the "appeal" to the accreditation decision, in the new system by the Accreditation Council. Likewise, § 1 states that the order refers to all quality assurance procedures of the agency, i.e. also those which are not covered by the Interstate Treaty.
- According to § 2 "Complaints and Appeals Regulations", the Executive Board decides on complaints concerning procedural issues (for example, technical procedural design). In this context, § 2 is worded in such a general way that this appeal procedure is not limited to higher education institutions.
- In § 3 "Complaints and Appeals Regulations", three further, possible cases of complaint are defined (complaints on the appointment of reviewer, the assessment result as well as the factual assessment by the Accreditation Committee). Furthermore, it is specified that the Accreditation Committee decides on the admissibility and justification of the complaint and - if necessary - makes the decision at the end.
- According to § 4 "Complaints and Appeals Regulations", higher education institutions can file an appeal against a decision of the Executive Board or the Accreditation Committee within one month. In this case, the objection and the relevant facts are handed over to the AKAST Complaints Committee.
- The Complaints Committee is regulated in § 5 "Complaints and Appeals Regulations". It consists of two academics representing different types of theological higher education institutions, one representative of professional practice and students, and one representative of an accreditation agency. The members of the Complaints Committee may not be members of the Executive Board or the Accreditation Committee.

In Annex 7, AKAST submits the resolution on the establishment of the Complaints Committee by the General Meeting of AKAST on 28/01/2021 and attaches biographical data of the members. AKAST informs in the self-assessment that the Complaints Committee was constituted on 10/03/2021 during its first meeting and that Rules of Procedure of the Complaints Committee are being drafted. On 09/06/2021 AKAST submitted the version that had been put into force. In the conversation on 10/06/2021, the review panel learns that no complaint or appeal has been received since the reaccreditation in 2018.

## Analysis

The revised "Complaints and Appeals Regulations" define the reasons and procedures for

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complaints and appeals in a comprehensible and consistent manner. It also takes into account the fact that in procedures of programme accreditation under new law, the Accreditation Council makes the decision on accreditation and therefore appeals to the accreditation decision are to be directed to the Accreditation Council. In accordance with the procedures at the Founda-  
5 tion Accreditation Council, the path for appeals on accreditation decisions is open not only to higher education institutions, but also to third parties. <sup>6</sup>

The review panel welcomes the establishment of a Complaints Committee as an independent body in addition to the Accreditation Committee. This certainly contributes further to confidence building in the field of quality assurance. The members of the Complaints Committee show  
10 themselves to be well prepared for their work and bring important experience from the fields of theological science, agency work, professional practice and student expertise. In this respect, the Complaints Committee can be said to have qualified expertise for its tasks.

#### **Panel conclusions:**

#### 15 **Compliance with Standard 2.7.**

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<sup>6</sup> See Accreditation Council Resolution dated 02/26/2019 "Drs. AR 42/2019 Information on Opportunities for Comments, Appeals, Grievances, and Grievance Procedures" [https://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2019/AR\\_Beschluss\\_Beschwerdeverfahren\\_20190226\\_Drs.\\_AR\\_42-2019.pdf](https://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2019/AR_Beschluss_Beschwerdeverfahren_20190226_Drs._AR_42-2019.pdf) retrieved on 06/22/2021.

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## Appendix 1: Abbreviations

CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> (Code of Canon Law)
DBK	<i>Deutscher Bischofskonferenz</i> (German Bishops' Conference)
Key points	Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder " <i>Eckpunkte für die Studienstruktur in Studiengängen mit Katholischer oder Evangelischer Theologie/Religion</i> " ("Key Points for the Structure of Studies in Study Courses Involving Catholic and Protestant Theology/Religion", (Key Points)), of 13 December 2007
EHEA	<i>European Higher Education Area</i>
ENQA	<i>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</i>
EQAR	<i>European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education</i>
ESG	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i>
KMK	<i>Kultusministerkonferenz</i> , Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder
KMK structural guidelines	Structural guidelines for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study programmes that are common for all <i>Länder</i> . KMK resolution of 10 October 2003, as amended on 04 February 2010.
MRVO	<i>Musterrechtsverordnung</i> (Specimen decree)
Rules	Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation of 08.12.2009 in the version of 20.02.2013
VDD	Association of German Dioceses, legal entity of the German Bishops' Conference
AR	Accreditation Council



**Annex 2: Schedule of discussions with AKAST**

25/05/2021

**Focused Review of AKAST in 2021**

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**Expert preparation on 09.06.2021 via video conference (Zoom)**

09/06/2021 from 10:00 to 11:00	Briefing of the review panel	internal
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**Discussions with agency on 10/06/2021 via video conference (Zoom):**

from 09:00 to 10:00	Discussion with the Executive Board of the agency and some members of the Accreditation Committee (among others the representative of the German Bishops' Conference)	<p>Prof. Dr. Michael <b>Gabel</b> (Chairman AKAST)</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Joachim <b>Schmiedl</b> (2nd Vice Chairman)</p> <p>Barbara <b>Reitmeier</b> M.A. (Managing Director)</p> <p>Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Christoph <b>Hegge</b> (Representative of the German Bishops' Conference)</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Joseph <b>Verheyden</b> (Vice Chairman Accreditation Committee)</p> <p>Florian <b>Tiede</b> (student substitute member)</p> <p>Dipl. Theol. Birgitt <b>Hossmann</b> (professional practice)</p>
15 min break		

from 10:15 till 11:00	Interview with some members of the Complaints Committee	Prof. Dr. Winfried <b>Hauerland</b> (Speaker)  Paul <b>Krämer</b> (student member)
From 11:00 to 12:00	Internal final round with the review panel	