

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee

and its *Work* in 2000/2001



Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC)
Budapest
2001

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Introduction	6
The History and Duties of HAC	8
Evaluation of HAC by Higher Education Institutions	17
Executive summary of the evaluation report of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee	22
Statement of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee concerning its external evaluation	28
Meeting of HAC's International Advisory Board	33
Joint Meeting between HAC's International Advisory Board and the INQAAHE Board	35
Meeting of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education	38
Bologna Day	39
Information Day	42
The Sixth Biennial Conference of INQAAHE	48
The Hungarian Accreditation Committee	53
HAC members delegated as of 1 January 2001	53
Permanent invited members	55
Non-voting members	55
Secretariat of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee	56
Functional and Expert Committees	57
Expert Committees for Programme Accreditation	57
Functional Committees	57
The International Advisory Board of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee	58
Accreditation in 2000	60
Institutions	60
Degree Programmes	60
Resolutions	61
Evaluation principles and procedure of appointing university and college professors ..	61
Monitoring procedures and the evaluation of off-site training	67
The relationship of university and college training	70
Passing opinions on applications for positions for	71
University and College Professors	71
Code of ethics	72
Strategic theses and principles	79
Abbreviations and codes of universities and colleges	84

Foreword

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) has published a review of its work annually both in Hungarian and English. Until now, the English version was a direct translation of the Hungarian edition. We found, however, that the detailed tables, the listings of HAC resolutions and the statistics behind them may be too elaborate for non-Hungarian readers. Looking back at the HAC and its Work in 2000 the present volume is an abridged edition, highlighting the main events and decisions.

The book focuses on HAC's major operating principles and international relations. As it appears in late 2001, it also reviews the major resolutions and events of the current year. This is especially important because upon the expiry of HAC's second three-year cycle on 31 December 2000 a new Committee was put in place in line with statutory requirements.

The Higher Education Act was amended by Hungary's Parliament in September 2000. As a result, the operation of HAC is now regulated by a new Government Decree. New HAC functions include the evaluation of applications for university and college professor positions to facilitate decision-making by the Minister of Education. To address this task, HAC developed a detailed system of procedures and requirements already prior to the publication of the relevant regulations. When the amended Act entered into force, HAC was fully prepared to evaluate incoming applications. Other new functions include the quality evaluation of off-site and distance learning courses. This task has a very tight deadline: 30 June 2002. Up to this date, HAC has to visit over 200 education sites.

Year 2000 saw the consolidation of PhD programmes into doctoral schools. Hungary's universities applied for the accreditation of about 150 doctoral schools which were granted provisional accreditation in December 2000. The deadline for their final accreditation is 30 June 2002. The accreditation process started in autumn 2001 following appropriate preparations. The submitted programmes have been evaluated by an evaluation panel comprising members of the Academy sitting on HAC's Plenum.

Pursuant to statutory requirements, institutions of higher education perform regular quality self-assessments. The analysis and processing of these annual quality reports and the establishment of new experience-based procedures mark further responsibilities for HAC.

The Ministry of Education and the World Bank signed a loan agreement for the restructuring and development of Hungarian higher education. Being an institution in charge of the quality evaluation of higher education, HAC also

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

received a portion of these resources. HAC used the World Bank funds available to order an evaluation from the Association of European Universities (CRE, now EUA). The summary of the final report prepared on HAC's operation by the international review committee of CRE in 2000 is also included in this book. The "accreditation" of HAC provided valuable support in the development of strategic plans for the coming years, in the simplification of procedures and it has also largely added to the international recognition of HAC.

The following table shows the number of decisions passed in 2000 and 2001.

	2000			2001	
	Posi- tive	Nega- tive	Other	Posi- tive	Negative
PhD programmes	13	4	15		
Establishing/launching new programmes	10	2		1	5
Launching	43	31		3	3
Qualification requirements	24	8	5	18	5
Higher vocational educational programmes	3			1	1
College recognition	1	1			
Faculty establishment	2	2			
Provisional accreditation of doctoral schools	141		6		
Institutional accreditation	17				
Accreditation of study programmes	4				

The figures above are hardly an indication of the actual quantity or quality of documents handled. They reveal nothing about the expert and consultant services, statistics and data HAC has provided to ensure the seamless operation of Hungarian higher education. In fact, the efficient and well-organised co-operation between the Plenum and the Secretariat of HAC is in large part responsible for the outcomes indicated by the numbers.

I hope that both the players involved in Hungarian higher education and the reader will appreciate the quality of HAC's performance.

Péter Kiss
editor

Introduction

Pál Michelberger

Being the President of the renewed Hungarian Accreditation Committee, it is my honour to greet the readers of this book. A newly appointed president has two major responsibilities: he must be very careful to recognise and preserve past values, but he also has to do his absolute best to improve the operation of the organisation under his control.

Under the presidency of *András Róna-Tas*, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee created lasting values in many fields. The most important of these is that during its nearly ten years of existence, HAC prepared a “quality inventory” of Hungarian higher education and – despite being a completely new type of organisation with no traditions in the country or region – it has become an integral part of Hungarian higher education and set the foundations for a much needed quality-driven approach.

A major achievement was that universities have been reinvested the right to provide doctoral (PhD) training and grant PhD degrees. This way, universities, after a forty-year hiatus, regained their self-identity established back in medieval times.

The prime responsibility of the Temporary Accreditation Committee and then the National Accreditation Committee was to prepare universities for the granting of academic degrees and to establish the financial and legal framework for quality assurance.

As a result of these efforts, doctoral schools were established in late 2000. Providing the necessary teaching/academic capacity and a knowledge sharing forum for students under one roof, these organisations open new prospects for academic training. The consistent pursuance of this work is a major pillar of my future activities.

The international integration and experience of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee marks another major value to preserve. HAC is supported by an advisory board comprising international experts; HAC and its President are members of several international quality assurance agencies in higher education (such as the European Rectors’ Conference – CRE/EUA, International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education – INQAAHE, European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA, European Association for Institutional Research – EAIR). HAC is also a founding member

of the Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network).

As HAC is involved in international networks of higher education quality assurance, it is in a good position to align its activities to leading international trends.

The analysis of past activities, however, highlighted not only values but also areas in need of change. The representation of professional organisations must be reinforced, accreditation procedures have to be simplified and accelerated.

Up to now, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee has relied first of all on the judgement of the academic community. This approach was justified in the early years, but now many factors including the labour market, the competitive environment, the necessity of lifelong learning, a market-oriented society and pending EU accession, require the corroboration of professional organisations.

This can be implemented by evaluating the employment opportunities of graduate students on the one hand, and by the broader involvement of employer representatives on the other.

The quality of higher education is not confined to the evaluation of training (i.e. the process itself) and directly related areas. It covers also the output, the market value of the acquired knowledge (employability) and its social-economic usefulness.

The reinforcement of user representation is maintained in the amended Higher Education Act and the approach of HAC. Non-academic members have been added to HAC and its committees, and a Hungarian Advisory Board has been established to assist HAC activities. This way, many recognised industrial, agricultural and business experts will help HAC establish closer ties with the practical fields.

I will also do my utmost to simplify and accelerate the accreditation process. The first round of institutional accreditation has been completed. Based on our experiences, the steps within the accreditation process need to be reviewed to identify and eliminate unnecessary, overcomplicated components. First of all I want to remove several bureaucratic elements that are based on quantifiable values. To provide vast amounts of data is often not necessary and the efforts they require mostly outweigh its benefits.

Performing the above tasks, HAC aims to maintain and improve the quality and reputation of a modern, appropriate and high-quality Hungarian higher education.

The History and Duties of HAC¹

András Róna-Tas

To understand the past activities and duties of HAC, the organisation needs to be reviewed along several dimensions.

The historical dimension

The quality of Hungarian higher education has been an issue historically addressed by the best educators, politicians and students of the nation. The importance of quality in higher education was clearly understood in the period of medieval peregrination, in the era of enlightenment and national revival, during the sweeping changes triggered by the Compromise of 1867, and in the years of post-Trianon² intellectual recovery. After WWII, higher education was restored as soon as the first bridge over the Danube. The communist takeover distorted Hungarian higher education in many ways, but certain “freedom spots” remained, where – far from the centres of political ideology and often bound by those in power – people tried to assert the essential principles of a quality education. It would be unjust to say that the quality of higher education was addressed only after the political and economic changes of 1989. Nevertheless, that year undoubtedly marked a major breakthrough in Hungarian higher education.

Those feeling responsible for Hungarian higher education clearly recognised in the post-1990 period that political freedom in itself does not guarantee quality in higher education, but it provides an opportunity for creating an appropriate quality framework. Basic structural problems inherited from the communist era, social transformation, a temporary but substantial economic downturn, and a totally new domestic and international competitive situation created new challenges and demanded new answers. After the autonomy of universities was restored, the right to issue PhD degrees had to be returned to these institutions. It was required by Hungarian traditions, international practice (which recognised only institutions with a right to issue PhD degrees as universities) and also domestic demand. Although the rigid separation of education and scientific research based on the Soviet model was not fully implemented in Hungary, the unity of education, research and the training of new scientist generations had to be

¹ Presented at the joint meeting of the old and the newly appointed HAC on January 26, 2001.

² The peace treaty after World War I in which Hungary lost two-thirds of its area and population.

re-established. This meant that doctoral training and the issuance of academic degrees had to be returned to universities. These rights were returned to universities in all post-communist countries, but Hungary was the only country where this legal action was accompanied by the elaboration of the relevant quality requirements. The Provisional National Accreditation Committee was established in 1992 as an evaluation panel to perform the quality review of applications. That time, many parties were sceptical about the success and the potentials of this endeavour. Time proved the proponents of this move right: quality was reinforced and financial conditions also improved as doctoral training was given a remarkable capital injection to enhance quality control. As a result of these achievements, the Higher Education Act of 1993 established a legally regulated accreditation committee whose functions included the quality certification of Hungary's entire higher education and the accreditation of its institutions and degree programmes. Sections 80 and 81 on the Accreditation Committee were unanimously approved by government and opposition members of the Parliament. The Act established the new Hungarian Accreditation Committee "*to continuously control and evaluate the quality of training and scientific research in higher education*" in 1994. The text of the Act was amended by adding the support of quality assurance to HAC's functions in 1996. Then the text was reworded and the latest amendment dated 2000 specified major HAC functions as the "*accreditation and assessment of quality*". The seemingly cosmetic amendments reflect differences in concept. It makes a difference whether HAC has to control or evaluate quality. The current government believes that all types of control – including quality control – fall in the competence of the national government responsible for taxpayers' money. It is not by chance, therefore, that the 1996 amendment authorised HAC to promote quality assurance but this phrase was omitted from the latest text version. The idea behind all this is that if HAC "promotes" the quality assurance of higher education institutions, it is not independent of this process, and therefore, it is not neutral enough to evaluate quality assurance. In the course of institutional accreditation, HAC definitely has to evaluate the status of quality assurance. During the negotiations conducted with government officials, the three parties involved (Ministry of Education, higher education institutions and HAC) outlined a mutually acceptable concept. It maintains that quality policy and formal control are the responsibilities of the Ministry, quality assurance needs to be established and managed by the autonomous institutions, while the evaluation of quality assurance is to be performed by HAC. The details of this "quality triangle", however, have not yet been clarified. This will be a major task for the next Plenum.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Amendments to the Higher Education Act have significantly expanded the functions of HAC. Note that it is an expansion in the true sense of the word, that is, HAC's original duties and their types have not been modified. In certain areas (PhD training) HAC passes decisions, while in other areas it outlines recommendations (expresses an opinion). It participates in the management of some issues, while in other cases it performs evaluation. The right to give recommendations makes HAC very powerful. Formally, it gives a recommendation to the Minister of Education in such cases. The resolutions of HAC's Plenum are position statements which, apart from those related to PhD training, are simply suggestions to the Minister. Subsection (2) of Section 74 of the Higher Education Act, however, provides that "*if the Minister of Education prepares a submission not in line with the position statement of HAC, he shall give an explanation*". This written explanation is published by HAC without initiating any further procedure. This way, responsibilities are clarified and public control is also ensured. Given this, Ministers of Education are not too likely to deviate from the position statements of HAC.

There are important reasons why HAC was given recommendation rights only. If it had been given administrative decision-making powers, it could not have remained an independent professional body. The professional independence of HAC is required under law and it is also essential to guarantee that quality criteria are asserted independently of any outside interest. Upon the establishment of HAC, we had two options to select from among those in international practice. Accreditation agencies are either government institutions or bodies integrated into the autonomy of higher education (this latter option has several sub-options). HAC is in a special situation as it is integrated into the autonomy of higher education but also provides recommendations to the government, that is, it is positioned halfway between autonomy and politics. The parties preparing the Higher Education Act of 1993 wanted to make HAC independent, and the body's recommendation rights are the "price" that had to be paid for this independence. (The only area where universities transferred part of their autonomy to HAC is doctoral training.)

The special position of HAC is reflected by the way its Plenum is established (nomination by organisations, proposition by the Minister, assignment by the Prime Minister) and the dependencies of HAC's organisational units. The Secretariat is subordinated to the Plenum and the President, but the Secretary General is appointed by the Minister in agreement with the President. I myself find the Secretary General's dual dependence unacceptable. At the same time, I consider the fact that the Financial Director is appointed by the Minister justified, as this is the only way to establish administrative control over the management of

budgetary funds. The new HAC will also have to declare its position in this regard. To sum it up, HAC has become a unique, well-structured organisation of checks and balances over its history of nearly ten years.

The social dimension

HAC stands for the interests of Hungarian society at large. Let me highlight some aspects of HAC's social dimension. The number of those involved in higher education is on the rise. The government set the realistic objective to enrol 50 percent of the relevant age group and 75 percent of secondary school leavers in higher education in the medium term. Both would-be students and their parents need reliable information on the academic quality of the institutions they are interested in. HAC has already prepared its first evaluation of all Hungarian institutions of higher education and their degree programmes. The information catalogue for university/college applicants does not include these data, but they can be obtained via the Internet or by phone. The new HAC has major tasks in this field.

Another aspect of HAC's social dimension is related to the social efficiency of Hungarian higher education. Quality is practically defined as being fit for a given purpose. The purpose, however, is rather difficult to identify in this case. HAC can be held responsible, for example, for the quality of graduates which is a very important and concrete issue. What skills should graduates possess? How can the requirements set by society, employers and users be satisfied? There are many conflicting views in this respect. Knowledge- or skills-centred, theoretical or practical training, focus on managing existing information or on innovation, data transmission or personalised education, individual learning or team work – to mention but a few of major points of contention. The answers given to these questions and their weight in HAC's approach make a difference for society. I myself consider one point very important when answering these questions: the consideration of both short-term and long-term social needs. An exclusive focus on short-term, market needs threatens the future of society. Long-term thinking needs to concentrate on the quality of life (both in terms of society at large and those involved in higher education). In line with its strategic plan, HAC will organise a discussion forum about these issues in the first half of the year to provide orientation for everyday decision-making. This is especially important because national qualification requirements need to be reviewed and reworked, and HAC has a major statutory responsibility in this process.

HAC's social dimension includes also the trend based on which involvement in higher education is not completed upon earning the first degree. Graduates need

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

to participate in specialised postgraduate education to facilitate life-long learning. As needs and the required knowledge tend to change at an increasingly rapid pace and there is an expectation to improve the quality of life, higher education has to “extend” its activities using also IT techniques. The content and quality of this type of education has implications for the entire society.

As part of its social dimension, HAC has to maintain links to the field of politics. The legal background to this has already been discussed under the historical dimension. Within this legal framework, however, everyday work can be performed in various ways. It is advisable to make a distinction between education policy and politics in general, even if these two fields are mutually dependent in practice. Even developed western democracies have not yet reached full independence in this area, although the process is at a lot more advanced stage there. The experts drafting the international report on HAC’s activities found it difficult to understand, especially at the beginning of their work, that these two fields have a historically different relationship in Central and Eastern Europe than in their home countries. Institutions like HAC need to keep a distance from general politics. HAC has been successful in this regard to date and should keep to this practice also in the future. The risk of political involvement, however, is present every time a body’s composition is changed. In light of this, I ask the new HAC to pay special attention to this issue when making their first decisions. Later, the players of general politics will accept the neutrality of HAC. At the same time, however, HAC must assume an active role in shaping education policy.

The higher education policy dimension

The reformation of Hungarian higher education is currently underway. HAC has already evaluated the two phases of integration: institutional integration and the integration of faculties. The proposal submitted to Parliament was based on the opinion formulated by HAC in many ways but at certain points the government ignored HAC’s position. The new HAC will face some problematic issues as a result, I am afraid.

We called the government’s attention to the fact that faculties are expected to become more powerful which may be detrimental in terms of the central control and controllability of institutions. This is in line with the international trend as well. Note that the balance between faculties and rectors’ control is a very sensitive issue which must be based on the rules of autonomy. However, HAC will need to deal with the impact of this phenomenon on quality. International experience shows that if a rector is not given appropriate tools for the

implementation of institutional strategy, the academic quality of education is at risk at the given institution.

As soon as the institutional framework is established, training content becomes the major point of discussion. One related issue is the relationship between college-level and university-level education. Currently, Hungarian higher education has a dual structure, which means four structural levels: vocational higher education, college-level, university-level and doctoral (PhD) education. This issue is made especially acute by the Bologna Declaration signed by the Ministers of Education of the EU and candidate countries, including Hungary, in 1999. This document has some other major implications which will be covered under the international dimension. The signatories of the Declaration support “a system essentially based on two main cycles: undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries”. The signatories expect this strategy to strengthen Europe’s competitive position against the United States and Japan. The above three sentences have been subject to heated debate for the last two years and many details are still unclear. Nevertheless, Hungarian higher education has to address this problem. Whatever solutions will be devised for the individual details and professions at an international level, they will have major implications not only for the structure, but also for the contents, qualification requirements and curricula (curriculum content and quality) of Hungarian higher education. If HAC considers it necessary, it may hold a “Bologna Discussion Day” along with other higher education conferences and present its own answers on issues of principle and detail.

A recently published Government Decree on the Higher Education and Research Council (FTT) closed a major phase in FTT’s history. HAC is affected by this development not only because its representative attends FTT meetings on a regular basis (and FTT also delegates a representative to HAC meetings). The new Government Decree changed the division of labour between HAC and FTT. Earlier, HAC evaluated the quality of new degree programmes, while FTT reviewed their necessity and budget requirements. This division of labour, however, is no longer in effect. The list of quality requirements should now include factors related to demand, regional distribution, availability of human and financial resources. As a result, the criteria considered upon the launch of new degree programmes need to be revisited, and many issues of principle and

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

practical application need to be clarified. This topic should also be added to the new HAC's agenda.

The government has recently published a decree on the introduction of the credit system. HAC has special duties in this field, too. Its actions should cover the possibility of students to change to another programme, and channels of and limitations upon switching courses. HAC needs to get prepared for the handling of many professional issues related to the credit system.

All this is obviously related to the above-mentioned revision of qualification requirements. Hungary has set a world record with its 500 different degrees available in higher education. This situation, however, is intolerable both from a local and an international perspective. One of the dilemmas is that the number of degree courses has to be drastically reduced, and, at the same time, the launch of innovative degree programmes responding to justified social needs should not be hampered. Obviously, every new degree programme will try to demonstrate a justified social need it is responding to. Currently, HAC allows a degree programme to be established only if the difference between the material taught there and at existing similar programmes makes up at least 40 percent. The number of specialisations within a degree programme needs to be increased and degree programme groups have to be established. This requires a carefully elaborated strategy in which HAC will be given a key role. Developing this strategy, a meticulous attention must be paid to detail. In my view, it would be very important to organise a general discussion on the transformation of qualification requirements.

Last but not least, the education policy dimension covers also the issue of quality assurance at higher education institutions. Mass education, low staff income and a variety of other factors affects quality negatively. HAC needs to establish criteria and rules of procedure based on which the quality assurance system of higher education institutions can be evaluated. This process is referred to as meta-evaluation by the quality management community. Some work has already been done in this field, but the basic principles and related practical actions need to be discussed by the new HAC. This issue has significant international implications, too.

The international dimension

It would be useful to review the status of quality assurance in US and European higher education. The scope of this presentation, however, does not allow for such an outlook. Quality assurance is a very hot and widely debated issue in higher education. Its framework is given by various international organisations.

The largest one is the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Europe has two important organisations: the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), the network of EU institutions in charge of quality assurance in higher education, and the Quality Committee of the Association of European Universities and Rectors' Conferences. Last year, a similar association of Eastern and Central European quality assurance agencies in higher education was established in Budapest. I am a member of the executive boards of the first three organisations, while the activities of the fourth one are co-ordinated by HAC. This means that Hungarian interests are represented at the most important forums, and HAC has an appropriate access to information.

In addition to these institutions, there are many specialised accreditation agencies. FEANI, for example, operates in engineering education, while EQUIS is active in business education. US accreditation agencies also tend to establish representative offices in Europe. HAC receives invitations to international conferences on quality assurance in higher education on a weekly basis. The quality assurance of higher education is about to become part of “big business”. This dimension, however, implies major threats that have also been recognised by competent EU officials. The relevant study ordered by the EC was published last week.

Threats are further aggravated by the rapid growth of transnational education. In addition to franchise schemes (planting of courses and programmes in other countries), there is a new trend under which specialised multinational companies acquire higher education institutions. Five acquisitions of this type have taken place recently. In such cases, accreditation is also a form of consumer protection.

In Western Europe the scene used to be dominated by quality assurance aiming to improve quality and provide consultation, while in Eastern Europe accreditation focusing on evaluation and the enforcement of rules took the lead. Today, accreditation tends to gain ground in Western Europe due to pressure from governments and a large number of less powerful higher education institutions to respond to the “transnational education hype”, while in Hungary, for example, quality assurance is getting an increasing emphasis over accreditation.

In Hungary, the international recognition of Hungarian higher education, the value of Hungarian degrees in the international labour market and the mobility of Hungarian students in the coming decades are at stake. Another important factor is the ability of Hungarian higher education institutions to attract foreign students (several universities offer programmes in foreign languages). The international dimension of Hungarian higher education may gain or lose value through the activities of HAC. The national higher education system can no longer turn

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

inward. We have to face the challenge imposed by increasing presence of transnational education. It is not always easy to tell high-quality institutions from low-quality degree traders. HAC has clear statutory duties in this field but the Committee has discussed relatively few cases to date. The number of such cases is likely to rise.

In light of the above, the international dimension has a double-faced nature. It covers the quality evaluation of incoming players, as well as actions to maintain the international recognition of Hungarian degrees and the Hungarian higher education system in general.

As a result, quality assurance in higher education becomes increasingly sophisticated. It would be useful to set up a team along HAC's Secretariat which could keep pace with and provide valuable contribution to international development. The core of such an initiative has already been established. The International Advisory Board of HAC has provided major support in this field. This body, however, needs to be renewed as soon as possible. Plenum members also have important responsibilities in this regard. The threat of provincialism and hollow formalism is real. HAC can cope with future challenges only if it understands the environment it is operating in. If it has no understanding of the European situation and projected future trends, it will lose the benefits of EU accession and will suffer only from its drawbacks.

Please allow me to be self-critical in my closing. The new HAC will undoubtedly have to pay more attention to such general issues. Plenum members need to devote more time to discussing these topics than their predecessors did. If the Plenum becomes overwhelmed with daily management matters, its work may lose its meaning. Fortunately, Plenum members have broad-based experience in the field and they are all aware that their tasks are time consuming and require much effort. Outgoing Plenum members will surely provide support for the new HAC. As for myself, I will be more than happy to be of their assistance.

Evaluation of HAC by Higher Education Institutions

Tibor R. Szántó

In spring 1999, HAC invited the opinion of Hungarian higher education institutions on the accreditation process and HAC's general performance. In the initial, exploratory phase of the evaluation (March to May 1999) HAC representatives prepared in-depth interviews at 12 accredited and 2 non-accredited (rejected) institutions to identify major problem spots. The questionnaire prepared based on the results of this survey was distributed to all Hungarian higher education institutions in the second phase (June to September). This voluntary, anonymous questionnaire was processed in a fully controlled manner (coded summary sheet).

The initiative had a favourable reception which is reflected by the high participation rate (85.4 percent = 74+2 institutions).

RESULTS

About 80 percent of the surveyed institutions were satisfied with HAC's performance (75-85 percent satisfaction index for the individual questions). The ratio of negative answers ranged between 10 to 20 percent for multiple-choice questions and 1 to 10 percent for open questions.

1. ACCREDITATION

The vast majority of institutions consider accreditation essential in higher education (for institutions, faculties, graduate degree programmes and PhD programmes). For specialised postgraduate education, however, 37.8 percent of institutions (28) find accreditation unnecessary.

Accreditation-related work sometimes means an excessive burden for institutions, but they are willing to handle it in return for its tangible benefits. Surprisingly, they find accreditation useful not in terms of outside recognition in the first place, but rather in terms of the transparency and order of their internal operation.

Accreditation had a positive impact on the vast majority (65 institutions = 87.8 percent) of institutions. The mentioned benefits were related to order (self-perception, transparency, documentation), several types of motivation (identification of shortcomings, improvement of training quality, reinforcement of scientific research, earning of degrees) and development (organisational, curricular, institutional, quality assurance-related).

Negative effects were mentioned by 14 institutions (18.9 percent – excessive burden, the feeling of being threatened, rejection of new degree programmes).

Concrete remarks and recommendations related to accreditation (critical remarks ranged between 3 and 10 percent):

The self-evaluation report needs to be simplified and adjusted to the individual features of institutions (colleges, art education).

Accreditation visits are short and sometimes superficial. Visiting committee members sometimes demonstrate inappropriate understanding of the self-evaluation report. Visiting committees should include more foreign members and more practical specialists (users).

The process should give more consideration to the special features of colleges (8.1 percent), it should be more objective, quantifiable, differentiated and use a broader evaluation scale. HAC should demonstrate a higher level of determination when rejecting the applications of low-level institutions. The evaluation of degree programmes should be based on a four-grade scale (84 percent).

The similar degree programmes of different institutions should be compared to prevent a lower-quality programme from getting a higher score.

Recommendations were made both for tightening and loosening the accreditation rules of degree programmes.

2. THE OPERATION OF HAC

The independence of HAC from higher education institutions and administrative bodies was considered essential by nearly every respondent (93.2 percent and 94.6 percent, respectively). Sixty-one institutions (80.3 percent) found the functions and structure of HAC to be in line with the relevant requirements, while 11 institutions (14.5 percent) gave a negative answer to this question. Most of those dissatisfied had concerns related to independence and fair and equal representation. (Such concerns were raised by some – mostly large – public and private institutions.)

Most respondents (81 percent) considered HAC's operation compliant with the pertinent legal regulations, but the ratio of "do not know" answers was also remarkable (13.5 percent) (smaller institutions, universities).

The publicity of HAC's rules of procedure was considered appropriate by 86.5 percent, only 8 institutions (10.8 percent – 6 public, 2 private and 5 large institutions) raised concerns in this regard. Awareness of HAC's rules of

procedure received a somewhat lower score (81.3 versus 16 percent, with the second group including several public and small institutions).

Sixty-two institutions (83.8 percent) were satisfied with the accessibility of HAC's assessment and evaluation criteria, while 11 institutions (14.9 percent – both small and large institutions) gave a negative answer to this question.

Major concerns and recommendations related to HAC's activities:

Structure and composition

The composition of expert committees is not appropriate (15 institutions – 20.3 percent)

The structure of HAC is not appropriate (independence, fair and equal representation) (11 institutions – 14.5 percent)

Colleges do not have a proportionate representation in HAC bodies

Users are insufficiently represented in HAC

Publicity, availability of information

Insufficient information available on the composition of expert committees (24 institutions – 32.4 percent)

Unsatisfactory general flow of information (16 institutions – 21.6 percent)

(Twenty institutions – 26.7 percent – have not yet visited our homepage, though.)

Insufficient awareness of HAC-activities within the given institution (14 institutions – 18.9 percent)

Insufficient publicity of evaluation criteria (11 institutions – 14.9 percent)

The issue of accreditation requires more efficient representation, outside publicity needs to be improved

Liaison with institutions needs to be improved, HAC should appoint officials in charge of the individual institutions, hold regular briefings and share accreditation experience

Transparency

Evaluation criteria are not unambiguous and clear enough (21 institutions – 27.6 percent /colleges/)

They cannot decide whether HAC complies with legal regulations (10 institutions – 13.5 percent)

HAC decisions are sometimes (9.3 percent) or mostly (2.7 percent) inadequately founded

The explanation of decisions is sometimes (5.4 percent) or mostly (6.8 percent) inappropriate, too brief, not concrete enough

Operation

Bias (subjectivity) in HAC decisions:

The respondent institution suffered bias– no: 70.6 percent, yes: 24 percent

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

The respondent institution considers HAC generally free of bias– yes: 75 percent, no: 22.4 percent

HAC sometimes (9.5 percent) or mostly (5.4 percent) fails to comply with deadlines (closed, multiple-choice question)

HAC is sluggish and bureaucratic (14 institutions – 18.9 percent, answer to an open question!)

The activities of HAC’s bodies and its Secretariat were evaluated by the institutions as follows. (Distribution applies to the pool of interviewed institutions with the answers “we have no sufficient information” and “no answer” excluded.)

	Institutional accreditation	New degree programmes	PhD programmes	Activities in general	Secretariat
Number of respondents (N)	71	51	30	56	73
Mode	strong	strong	strong	strong	strong (29) (excellent 28)
Median (close to)	strong (excellent)	acceptable (strong)	strong (excellent)	strong (acceptable)	strong (excellent)
Excellent (%)	29.6	11.8	33.3	16.1	38.4
Strong	45.1	37.2	43.3	48.2	39.7
(Excellent+ Strong)	(74.7)	(49.0)	(76.6)	(64.3)	(78.1)
Acceptable	22.5	31.4	20.0	32.1	21.9
Not acceptable	2.8	19.6	3.4	3.6	0.0
	2 institutions	10 institutions	1 institution	2 institutions	

Table: Distribution of answers as a percentage of all respondents (N)

Based on the above table, institutions consider the running of the Secretariat, the evaluation of PhD programmes and institutional accreditation to be the major strengths of HAC. Its major weakness is the evaluation of new degree programmes. The high ratio of “not acceptable” answers negatively impacts also the evaluation of HAC activities in general. (It is based not on an arithmetic calculation but on the answer reflecting the institutions’ opinion on HAC activities in general.)

The analysis of answer codes shows that colleges demonstrated a more positive attitude to accreditation than universities. When evaluating programme accreditation and HAC activities in general, large institutions tended to give a

more distinctive answer (excellent, acceptable or not acceptable) than others. In the group giving an excellent assessment to programme accreditation, HAC activities in general and Secretariat performance, denominational and small institutions account for a ratio higher than their weight in the total sample (which means that they are more satisfied in these regards than public, medium-sized and large institutions).

THE FUTURE USE OF SURVEY RESULTS

The results rendered by the two evaluation phases have been discussed at several HAC forums. They were addressed at two Secretariat meetings one of which devoted a whole day to this issue. Problems highlighted by the institutions were reviewed and necessary/potential actions were identified. The Plenum received a report on the first phase of evaluation.

Actions to be taken:

- Development of a new (simplified) Accreditation Guidebook is currently underway
- HAC will contact chambers and consider the expansion of its expert network (broader user involvement)
- HAC will take action to improve the efficiency of information dissemination. It considers distributing its publications in more copies to institutions. (Note, however, that institutions could also do a lot to improve their internal information flow.)
- HAC's Internet homepage will be upgraded.
- HAC wants to improve the recognition and publicity of itself as an institution and also that of the accreditation process.
- HAC launched a project to modernise its internal IT network.
- HAC will establish a system of institutional programme officers (officers responsible for the individual institutions) at the Secretariat.
- HAC will hold regular briefings on quality assurance at higher education institutions for the general directors of colleges and the deans of university faculties.
- HAC asked programme officers to pay special attention to the timely processing of self-evaluation reports and to provide detailed and clear explanation for Committee decisions when organising expert committee meetings.

**Executive summary of the evaluation report of the
Hungarian Accreditation Committee**

1 This report is the outcome of a general review and evaluation of the Hungarian higher education accreditation system, and notably the work of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC). The evaluation of the HAC was carried out by an international Panel of highly experienced experts, hereafter called the Panel, under the auspices of the Association of European Universities (CRE). It aimed at covering, insofar as possible, all aspects of the objectives and operations of the HAC in the fields of institutional and faculty accreditation, evaluation of new programmes of study and approval of doctoral programmes, as well as the more recent role of the HAC in the field of quality assurance. It also looks to the future, by suggesting ways in which the present system of accreditation and the existing modes of operation might not only be improved, but also evolve towards a national quality assurance system, taking into account the present context of Hungarian higher education as well as relevant international (especially European) trends in this field.

2 This report is based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provided by the HAC (with substantial documentation in annex), a short preliminary visit and a one-week main review visit. The Panel had the opportunity to interview members of the HAC, the Hungarian academic community, and the authorities and stakeholders. This report reflects the Panel's perception of key issues and developments. Its comments and recommendations are confined to the major issues affecting accreditation and quality-assurance structures and procedures in Hungary, including the links to the higher education system and the policy context.

3 The report covers all key issues as specified in the Terms of Reference, although it does not follow the order of contents proposed therein. In numerous interviews, the Panel formed the impression that the HAC's SER had been widely distributed and was generally accepted as a key basis for the Panel's visits. However, it was viewed by the HAC's constituents as a Secretariat document, and it was not clear to what extent they shared the views expressed.

4 The Panel considers that, in its Self-Evaluation Report, the HAC assesses not only its strengths but also its limitations, and this is seen as very positive. In its SER, which was candid, even at times very self-critical, the HAC identified many of the issues which feature in this report, including the need for greater stakeholder involvement and for the elaboration of a system of internal quality assurance for the HAC itself.

5 Though the SER was rich in information, it was too cautious in addressing possible strategic options for accreditation, beyond those prevailing in the past. Although the report mentioned problems, such as those arising from overlapping mandates of the HAC and the HERC, and although it cited efforts made to reinforce accreditation by adding improvement-oriented quality assurance to minimum-standard assessment, it did not discuss possible future directions in this respect.

6 As specified in the Terms of Reference, the Panel made extensive use of interviews in formulating its opinions and conclusions. This is a well established practice in review processes. While isolated opinions should not be taken too seriously, especially if they contradict other evidence, the Panel had to take such opinions - when consistently voiced at many levels and by many different actors - into consideration, even if the factual basis could not be validated.

7 A review of the HAC needs to take account of the contextual and historical factors that have conditioned its development. These include fast and sweeping social and political change; the movement from an elite to a mass higher education system; the emergence of a private higher education system; economic constraints and changes in the rules for funding higher education; unstable higher education policies; and some special characteristics such as the 'small-country syndrome' and the 'capital-city phenomenon'. Other constraints have also influenced the work of the HAC, namely a low level of institutional and academic co-operation in some cases, conflicts and pressures linked to the fact that accreditation can represent a threat to the existence of institutions, the new process of institutional integration, the need to develop a highly elaborate procedural system in order to avoid appeals against negative decisions, continuous changes in legislation altering the tasks of the HAC, and work overload.

8 In the difficult circumstances referred to above, the HAC has established a firm foundation for the review of higher education in Hungary and has contributed to the introduction of a methodology for quality assessment. The HAC is to be congratulated for achieving a great deal with modest resources in a fast changing and complex environment. Over its relatively short existence, it has undertaken an increasingly diverse portfolio of tasks and functions, the management of which is complicated by the differing roles and responsibilities assigned to the HAC in respect of those tasks.

9 The HAC's achievements are reflected in the completion of a first round of institutional and faculty accreditation, the approval of doctoral programmes, the publication of the Accreditation Guidebook and the formulation of clear and public rules of procedure and principles of evaluation.

10 Considering the dramatic changes that have occurred in Hungarian higher education over the last ten years, the HAC has acted as a stabiliser and contributed to the development of the higher education system. The Panel commends the efforts of the HAC, its Secretariat and Committee members to promote the values and characteristics recognised internationally as essential to a quality assurance system – independence, transparency, self-evaluation, peer review and public reporting – within the Hungarian higher education community. It is important to recognise the independence of the HAC vis-à-vis the government and the higher education institutions.

11 Since its establishment, the HAC has devoted considerable energy and time to upholding minimum standards against a background of the rapid evolution of the Hungarian higher education system into a mass system and the emergence of a private sector of higher education. The Panel considers that the HAC has been successful in containing an explosive development of this private sector, thus avoiding a situation that is rather frequent in other Eastern European countries, where a large network of private institutions with low academic standards has been established.

12 But this success has exacted its price. Paying this price may have been necessary at the time the HAC was founded, in order to ensure success, but over

the years this has become more and more questionable. At the time of this review, it seems appropriate to reconsider the HAC's option.

13 First, the criteria employed to assess higher education institutions and programmes for accreditation have been narrow. The legal implications of not recommending or granting accreditation have been seen as dictating a relatively bureaucratic system, while the prevailing views on academic quality seem to have favoured a system that relies primarily on numerical standards. This has run counter to the encouragement of substantive diversity in higher education and to the recognition of the specific role of the non-university sector, even though the HAC has taken a broad range of measures to counteract this endemic thrust. This approach also made it difficult to address issues such as the high degree of specialisation in fields of study, the quality of teaching and learning practices, and the impact of management structures and practices on the quality of programmes.

14 Second, from the outset the HAC has adhered to an interpretation of academic quality that did not take into account considerations of utility, social relevance or feasibility (e.g. financial support). The most obvious manifestation of this is the division of labour between the HAC and the HERC, the former basing its recommendations on academic quality, the latter on relevance and feasibility. The Panel believes that this division might have been helpful in the early 1990s as a step towards emancipation from an over-politicised past, but over time it became more and more artificial and detrimental to a consistent and comprehensive review of quality. This issue is clearly intertwined with the role of academics and external representatives in the Hungarian accreditation system; it is widely assumed that the marginal role of external representatives in the various HAC activities has made it more difficult to extend quality criteria beyond completely internal academic rationales.

15 Third, the HAC's emphasis on examining minimum standards and fulfilling a licensing function has been so overwhelming from the outset, that it has induced a culture of compliance. Only rudimentary efforts have been made to add elements of improvement-oriented quality assurance to the core of standards-based accreditation, and these have not seemed to take off in the dominant culture of compliance.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

16 The Panel formulated recommendations designed to improve HAC activities within the framework of its own traditional philosophy. For example, it recommends that the HAC reduce the excessive burden on institutions imposed by self-reporting, that it give clear guidance on the composition of Visiting Committees and on a code of conduct for members and that it define a clear strategy for training. The HAC also needs to create an internal system of quality assurance, including the development of standards of performance other than time schedules and adherence to the law. The Panel recommends that the HAC rely less exclusively on the use of experts holding a scientific degree and that the format, transparency and accessibility of accreditation reports be reviewed. Finally, the Panel suggests considering options to better address the problems of the more vocationally oriented college sector, and a concurrent review of the various fields of study, including related interdisciplinary fields, so as to address the issue of programme breadth and interdisciplinarity.

17 The Panel suggests that ensuring the strengths of the accreditation system in Hungary may no longer require a *quid pro quo*. In this context, the Panel considers it futile to debate whether the HAC could or should have been changed earlier, or whether the time is now ripe to shift strategic priorities. Prior recommendations by the International Advisory Board, as well as criticism frequently voiced by academics and especially by external stakeholders, suggest that strategic changes of the HAC could have been put on the agenda earlier, but this is not essential for the suggestions the Panel makes.

18 The Panel suggests reconsidering and possibly abolishing the system of dual assessment by the HAC and the HERC. Among the other recommendations are: establishing conditions that would allow external representatives to play a more successful minority role in the accreditation system, thereby contributing to a broader perspective on academic quality, and encouraging greater diversity in the Hungarian higher education system. Finally, the Panel suggests that improvement-oriented assessment should become the prime concern of quality assurance in the Hungarian higher education system, while licence-oriented, minimum-standard accreditation should play only a secondary role.

19 There is no one optimal model for quality-assurance systems. The choices that have to be made when designing a national quality assurance and/or accreditation system grow out of the broader policy framework for higher education and choices linked to the system's intrinsic culture. In the case of Hungary, the Panel would tend to recommend a combination of accreditation (with a licensing function) and quality assurance functions, with a very clear division of roles and focuses. Such a division does not imply any particular organisational pattern or other arrangements. A variety of scenarios can be envisaged when organising a system that combines quality assurance and accreditation/licensing. For this reason, the Panel does not recommend any single model for the future management of accreditation and improvement-oriented evaluation in Hungary.

20 Whatever the choices made by the Hungarian government and the other main actors in Hungarian higher education, the Panel, following its review of the HAC, offers the following reflections:

- a) Trust is an essential ingredient in the improvement of quality.
- b) Institutions are now responsible for the implementation of internal quality assurance systems. The role of an external agency should be mainly supportive. Periodic (though not annual) quality audits should serve mainly to help institutions improve their internal systems. This new role is quite incompatible with imposing detailed external regulation or burdensome reporting.
- c) The Panel wonders whether the HAC can make the organisational and cultural changes necessary for this new role, particularly if it keeps the licensing function. The recent decision to give the HAC a role in the process of academic promotion may have a very negative impact on the development of trust in academe and the institutions.

**Statement of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee
concerning its external evaluation³**

1. Having reached a decisive stage in its development, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee has invited an international panel to evaluate its work. The HAC believed that at this stage in its history it was imperative to obtain an “evaluation of the evaluators.” The external review was timely and important because the first round of institutional accreditation was completed and it became urgent that the HAC should adapt to a changing environment, moreover the need arose to plan the HAC’s strategy for the future. According to the Terms of Reference the consortium undertaking the evaluation had the following mandate.
 - Explore how far the aims and functions – prescribed by legislation – of HAC are appropriate for the next decade and the process of integration of HEIs.
 - Examine the roles, functions and effectiveness of HAC and its sub-committees.
 - Examine whether the structure, composition, terms of reference, the size and competence of the secretariat are suitable for the aims and functions of HAC.
 - Explore how effective the process for institutional and faculty evaluation have been, the impact on HEIs and other stakeholders and what improvements can be made.
 - Examine the role and assistance of HAC in preparing the self evaluation of HEIs.
 - Examine the practice of appointing the visiting committees.
 - Examine the practice of site visits of the visiting committees.
 - Explore how effective are the reports of the visiting committees and what are the follow-up mechanisms.
 - Investigate how, and how well HAC carries out its function of approving doctoral programmes and expressing opinion on degree course requirements.
 - Investigate how effectively are the tasks of HAC undertaken by reviewing the process used and obtaining the views of the stakeholders. The evaluation team should report to what extent HAC has made progress with these task, and make recommendations for improvements that HAC might make in respect to these tasks.

³ The statement is the outcome of a debate of the HAC plenum at its meeting on November 24, 2000.

- Monitoring the measures taken by HAC in response to the report of the consultant.

Under the auspices of the *Association of European Universities* (CRE) the consortium panel was set up of especially renowned experts representing diverse traditions and trends in higher education quality assessment. The panel members were

- Alberto Amaral, Chairman of the Panel, Director of the *Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies* (CIPES), Portugal,
- Judith Eaton, President of the *Council for Higher Education Accreditation*, USA,
- Marie-Odile Ottenwaelter, former Deputy Secretary General of the *Comité National d'Evaluation*, France,
- Ulrich Teichler, Director of the *Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work*, Germany,
- Christian Thune Executive Director of the *Danish Evaluation Institute*, Denmark, and President of the *European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA),
- Carolyn Campbell, Former Assistant Director at the *Higher Education Quality Council*, United Kingdom,
- Sami Kanaan Program Manager, CRE – *Association of European Universities*, Switzerland.

To finance the evaluation the Hungarian government disbursed a significant sum from the World Bank loan for higher education reform in this country.

2. The panel was circumspect and thorough in the task it has accomplished. In the course of the panel's work it was not always unequivocal how well its members understood the particular problems which grew out of both the traditions and the current situation in Hungarian higher education. Nevertheless the majority of these questions could be cleared up in the course of the procedure. We would like to stress that no established practice exists as yet for the external evaluation of national organizations of quality assurance in higher education. While focused evaluations have been done (in the U.K., Denmark, Hong Kong, etc.) there has never been such an in-depth and detailed exposing and evaluation of problems. The panel is to be commended that despite the diverse experiences and views among its members and the lack of an established international practice for this type of evaluation it put on the table a document which provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis and

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

evaluation as well as recommendations. We are especially grateful to Alberto Amaral, who has ultimately succeeded in establishing a common platform for the views of the panel members, derived from their different backgrounds and convictions. He played no small part in overcoming the challenge the panel has faced in understanding the Hungarian context, and consequently a coherent document was produced.

3. In the course of the procedure we have had useful and extensive discussions with the panel, and these were more detailed and intense than is customary in visits of this kind. The panel's recommendations include several which we have begun to implement already before we received its final report. They involve two documents in particular: The HAC plenum has been presented with a draft for a strategic plan for the HAC, and a draft code of ethics, that is a set of guidelines for the conduct of HAC members, expert committee members, and staff members. In compiling these documents we have very much observed the panel's recommendations.
4. All of the panel's recommendations deserve close scrutiny. For some of them the necessary legislative background, which was missing earlier, was enacted even before the panel finalized its report. Among these are the greater involvement of external stakeholders, and the broader representation of colleges in the HAC's work, which were set down in the 2000 amendment to the Higher Education Act and the new government decree on the HAC passed on November 14, 2000. The new plenum can be selected accordingly. Now follows the reworking of the regulations on expert and visiting committees, which the future HAC plenum will pass.
5. The panel stressed in its recommendations that the established division of responsibilities for the HAC and the Higher Education and Research Council (HERC) should be reconsidered. The panel found that although in the initial stage there was a rationale behind the HAC and the HERC separately evaluating new degree programs or qualification requirements (the HAC being mandated to look at their quality, while the HERC charged with examining them in light of higher education strategy and financial feasibility) this should be changed in the future. The HAC also needs to consider such programs' social relevance and compliance with higher education strategy. Therefore it is evident that the needs of society must be included among the criteria for evaluation. It is more difficult to pinpoint how social and group interests can be separated (something the panel did not attempt to do either) given the fact that group interests always appear as necessary parts of the national strategy. In restructuring the HERC, the government obviously held a similar view as the panel's.

6. The panel believes that the accreditation system based on a strict set of criteria has fulfilled its function, and that now accreditation based on compliance with minimum standards should appear combined with assessment with a quality improvement function. We completely agree. This approach is manifest in the 2000 amendment of the Higher Education Act, which declares that quality assurance is a responsibility of higher education institutions. With this, the HAC is able to turn its attention, in addition to accreditation, to an improvement and support oriented “meta-evaluation” of quality assurance. The panel and the HAC had different views on the pace and mode of managing the transition, but in planning it all the elements in the recommendations must be considered.
7. The panel recommended that the HAC reconsider its requirement that everyone involved in its work hold a scientific degree. This was not a requirement for external experts in the past, but in the future the members of the HAC’s expert committees and visiting committees should also include members who represent, and offer their insight into the requirements of, a given profession, and thereby assist in the quality assurance of higher education in Hungary. We must accept the panel’s point that in the quality assessment of the college sector more experts with college practice should be involved, noting, however, that college professors have been active in both our expert committees and visiting committees, also as chairpersons.
8. The panel noted on several occasions that the accreditation procedure is in some places overly bureaucratic, exacting too great a workload on those involved, and that the regulations often exist for the purpose of protecting the HAC against a possible legal inquest. Again, we must concur. On completion of the first full round of institutional accreditation the “quality inventory” of Hungarian higher education is in place; every degree program of every institution underwent the accreditation procedure and has also received a more or less full evaluation. We believe that this one-time investment will pay off, while completely agreeing with the panel that the bureaucratic elements, those based purely on numerical standards and which demand an unnecessary amount of work, must be eliminated in the future.
9. The panel criticized two current problems. One is that the HAC expects detailed and formalised annual quality reports from higher education institutions, the other is the mandate for the HAC to state its opinion regarding academic promotion. The criticism that the HAC demands too much data from institutions must be heeded in this context as well. (We must note however, that the HAC accredits institutions on the basis of evaluating their degree programmes. That is the reason why we ask for a short description of each

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

program within the given institution.) Nevertheless, both the annual quality reporting requirement and HAC's involvement in academic promotion are set down in the Higher Education Act, consequently the HAC will pass on the panel's comments to the policy makers.

10. The panel believes that the HAC should establish an internal system of quality assurance and that the members of the staff and committees undergo regular training and briefings. These are very important recommendations. (We should note here that we have invited tenders for the first and are taking measures concerning the second issue.) We must also think about how the HAC should evaluate its work in the future. For this the recommendations unfortunately fail to include feasible suggestions.
11. We do not wish to hide the fact that there were some issues on which the panel's and the HAC's opinions differed, and which even the utterly correct discussions could not bring closer. These debates will no doubt continue in the forums of higher education in Hungary and elsewhere. We do not think that the external evaluation of the HAC is the proper occasion to carry on the debate.

Finally and in summary we wish to extend our special regard and appreciation to the international panel, its chairman and each member, and to the CRE which organized the procedure, for their very thorough and altogether useful work. The HAC's activities have improved already as a result of their visit. Their recommendations must be examined with care, and each achievable element must be exploited. We recommend that the panel's report be published both in English and Hungarian. At the same time we urge the new HAC whose members are to be elected shortly that they carefully study the report and use the recommendations as they deem best.

**Meeting of HAC's International Advisory Board
6-7 May 2000**

Following a joint meeting with the Board of Directors of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies on May 6, 2000, the Advisory Board of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee held its annual meeting on May 7. Members present were Josep Bricall, Hans-Uwe Erichsen, Josef Jarab, Inge Jonsson, John W. Ryan, Virgílio Meira Soares, and Don F. Westerheijden. HAC member Ernő Taxner and General Secretary Gabriella Homonnay were also present. The meeting was chaired by President András Róna-Tas. HAC foreign affairs officer Christina Rozsnyai acted as secretary.

Concluding the meeting the Advisory Board began by giving an overview of the HAC's work in the past 5-6 years, and continued by formulating recommendations.

1. At the end of its second term the Advisory Board takes note that its advice has been received, has been seriously considered and has had some impact.
2. The Advisory Board believes that the HAC has helped the Hungarian system of higher education to reach a very important point of the education system in the international context, in particular to Hungary's pre-accession status in the European Union and to the trend of globalization of higher education.
3. The Board expresses its appreciation that the HAC followed up on its recommendation to take on an international role. The HAC should share its experiences and seek cooperation with countries in the region which also have gone through a transition of its educational systems.
4. The Board appreciates the conceptualization of the role of various parties in quality assurance in Hungary, namely the quality policy role as the responsibility of the ministry of education, the quality assurance role as the responsibility of the institutions, and the quality assessment role as a responsibility but not exclusively of the HAC. The HAC has made an important contribution in raising the awareness of affected parties to their role in quality assurance.
5. It derives from this that the locus for quality assurance with respect to faculty professors is the university, drawing upon the assistance of the HAC. It is the right and responsibility of the university to watch and guarantee the quality of its faculty. It is not the role of the HAC to act as a court of appeal in professorial nominations and appointments.
6. Not only is the university the locus of the quality assurance of professorial appointments, promotion and performance, but the academic and economic

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

implications of the quality and sustainability of its faculty in the short and long term should also be taken into consideration.

7. In view of the probability of current dramatic changes in higher education, continued and ongoing evaluation and accreditation is needed.
8. The HAC did follow up on the Board's recommendation in getting an external review, which is now near completion. The Board looks forward to receiving the final report of the external review team. The evaluation has sought to define the role of the HAC in the future.
9. The Board is impressed that in only a few years' time the HAC has implemented procedures and practices for and has actually evaluated over 400 educational programs. The involvement in the process of quality assurance of over a thousand experts, including some from other countries in areas where this was called for, has been very inclusive and very impressive.
10. The Advisory Board has from the very beginning accompanied and supported the HAC in proactively seeking its role as an active partner in educational policy debate and in the process of reforms and further development of higher education in the country.
11. In the future, the HAC may continue to benefit from the experience, knowledge and competence of its Advisory Board by seeking its advice in the debates on higher education policy.
12. The HAC should continue to make use of individual members of the Advisory Board in specific issues whenever the need arises and in addition to and between the annual meetings.
13. Convinced by the current situation the Advisory Board is repeating its strong conviction that in the next appointment of its membership the principle of continuity, perhaps through staggered year terms, should be observed.

*Compiled by
Christina Rozsnyai*

**Joint Meeting between HAC's International Advisory Board and the
INQAAHE Board⁴**

Budapest, 6 May 2000

Gabriella Homonnay

The evaluation of the quality of higher education in the modern sense of the word began and became increasingly accepted in the course of the 20th century, and has by now become an indispensable practice. A whole assortment of higher education systems, evolved from unique traditions, and policies, approaches and procedures of quality assessment, developed according to a variety of principles and conditions, exist today.

Stated very simplistically, these obviously very different quality assurance systems followed one of two approaches in all countries. Either they

- ❖ professed an academic orientation, considering—and examining—quality from the angle of acknowledged professors and teachers and the system of values adhered to in academic higher education, or
- ❖ they were professionally oriented, judging quality as something relative to its cost-effectiveness and the interests of the consumers of education and the employment market.

The two approaches, naturally, overlap time and again, and assigning a system to any given group necessarily leads to the oversimplification of its features. In this light, the meeting in the Thermal Hotel on Margaret Island in Budapest of the academically oriented International Advisory Board of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) and the Board of Directors of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was certainly of singular significance.

The meeting brought together representatives of the following countries,

- ❖ from the HAC Advisory Board
the Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United States (with the members from France and the United Kingdom absent),
- ❖ from the Board of the INQAAHE

⁴ This report includes additions by the President of INQAAHE

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Canada, Chile, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Jamaica, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The presence of participants from a geographic spread such as this, who at the same time were world renowned experts in higher education quality assurance, provided an opportunity for an intense exchange of a great variety of experiences. In the short time available the discussion required good preparation. To this end András Róna-Tas, president of the HAC and a member of the INQAAHE Board, prepared a set of comprehensive questions and ideas to serve as the basis for discussion. The purpose was to find the common denominators in the two approaches and value systems and to pinpoint the mutual advantages.

The questions were

1. What should the interrelationship be between internal quality assurance and external evaluation?
2. What should the main focus of external evaluation be: teaching and research or governance, or quality assurance?
3. How can the dynamic balance between intrinsic values (content related) and extrinsic values (consumer related) be achieved in higher education?
4. Should an accreditation agency have a quality assurance system and performance standards for itself? If so, which ones?
5. Future trends: External evaluation of accreditation agencies, or mutual recognition of accreditation agencies?

Summary of the main conclusions of the discussion

Question 1 raised the greatest interest. Very briefly it can be stated that internal quality assurance must have priority over external quality control.

In time both processes must, individually and reciprocally, show ongoing improvement. The rules and regulations must constantly be developed and updated. The following consideration must be kept in mind.

- ❖ Universities are autonomous and intellectual institutions with their own internal laws, therefore regulations must be applied based on the given circumstances. Even within one country universities are very different, especially if the country is large (India, USA).
- ❖ The old traditional universities also have a stake in knowing their level of quality, and several developed countries practice their evaluation. The Central and Eastern European countries, with only a ten-year tradition of autonomy, are challenged to adopt a quality culture.
- ❖ An ongoing relationship must be established between the traditional system of requirements, the demands of the labor market, the expectations of the various professional fields, and the needs of the different strata of society.
- ❖ Even in the English language community terminology varies, therefore it should be used with care and precision.

Question 2 developed into a discussion about the recently accomplished integration of higher education institutions in Hungary. The Hungarian participants briefly presented the issue. The reactions converged on two points.

- ❖ Raising quality should in no sense be linked with the process of rationalization; and
- ❖ universities should decide for themselves how they can achieve the best results within the new system, and in this they should receive support and assistance.

Question 3 concerning content and the balance of the interests of the consumers becomes increasingly difficult in an environment in which business and industry, and especially multinational companies, require training that breeds students capable of solving problems quickly. The collaboration of the so-called stakeholders is crucial, as is the consideration of the opinions of alumni.

Question 4 the INQAAHE participants unequivocally responded to by saying that all accrediting bodies need to have an internal quality assurance system.

Question 5 could not be debated for lack of time, but the participants tended to give preference to mutual recognition as a future trend.

**Meeting of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in
Higher Education**

Budapest, 18-19 November 2000

Christina Rozsnyai

Representatives of Quality Assurance Committees and Agencies from Central and Eastern European countries met in Budapest on November 18-19, 2000. The meeting was organized by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: first to establish a Regional Subnetwork for Central and Eastern Europe of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Subnetwork) and second, to discuss the joining of the Associated Countries of the European Union to the European Network of Quality Assurance ((ENQA).

The meeting was chaired by András Róna-Tas, President of HAC and coordinating chair of the CEE Subnetwork. Participants included the representatives of quality assurance agencies from the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. The meeting was attended also by the representative of the Ministry of Education and a guest speaker: Don F. Westerheijden, representative of CHEPS/CRE, who introduced the results of an ongoing institutional evaluation programme launched by CRE in 1993.

Christina Rozsnyai introduced the organisation and operation of INQAAHE. Several agencies represented at the meeting had already joined INQAAHE. Participants agreed to establish the Central and Eastern European Regional Subnetwork, signed a letter of intent and developed an action plan. Until the next meeting to take place in Cracow, Poland in October 2001, activities were coordinated by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. The regional committee established a website (www.mab.hu/cee) which can be accessed by all participants and interested readers. The individual agencies share their experience with each other on a regular basis. The new organisation was represented in the steering group of ENQA by Hungary.

Bologna Day

Organised by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee on 31 May 2001

The establishment of a European Higher Education Area is both a common need and an inevitable task in Europe. It is a need because this is the only way to preserve the manifold values accumulated in the history of European higher education. At the same time, it is also a task and a challenge, because every standardisation effort puts the national excellence of the individual countries at stake.

This process will not leave Hungary intact either. It marks a special challenge for Hungarian higher education as the Sorbonne-Prague transformation aims not only to solve some partial problems of higher education but requires changes in the entire higher education system. This fundamental and large-scale transformation implies a special responsibility as it should not negatively impact quality. Just on the contrary, it has to further quality improvement in higher education.

As Hungarian higher education is in a special position, its stakeholders should discuss their transformation strategy at as many forums as possible. The Bologna Day organised by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee had a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it was one of the first conferences where the experts of higher education and those of the user community could meet and discuss the duties imposed on Hungarian higher education by the Bologna Declaration and the Ministers' Statement issued in Prague. On the other hand, the event was also the manifestation of partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee.

The conference did not mean to be the forum to develop a detailed transformation strategy for Hungarian higher education. As *Pál Michelberger*, President of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee and chairman of the event, pointed out in his opening address, the conference aimed to "provide orientation" to HAC and higher education institutions.

European Higher Education Area

Ádám Kiss, Deputy Deputy Secretary of State for the Ministry of Education, analysed the process between the Sorbonne Statement and the Ministers' Summit in Prague, and presented its implications for the activities of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee in the coming years. He reiterated that the document

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

drafted at the Ministers' Summit in Prague reinforced the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and that every country needs to take appropriate action to support the establishment of a European Higher Education Area.

Regarding relevant Hungarian action, he highlighted the seven points which have a direct impact on the activities of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee.

1. Standardisation of degrees and certificates. For this, the relationship between the Hungarian higher education system and the English-American two-tier system and the Prussian dual system needs to be clarified.
2. The credit system needs to be developed, and the qualification requirements must be accordingly transformed in order to ensure student mobility and the flow of labour.
3. National quality assurance systems need to be co-ordinated. HAC must assume an active role in this process.
4. The European dimension must be given more room in Hungarian higher education. To further this end, criteria have to be developed for the accreditation of various European education modules.
5. HAC needs to contribute to the development of conditions for credit accumulation and to the drafting of the requirements of distance education to facilitate life-long learning.
6. HAC has to support a shift of paradigm in the relationship between higher education institutions and their students (adoption of a partnership approach).
7. As mass education is established, the quality of elite education also needs to be improved. HAC is competent also in this field: it is responsible for setting requirements for doctoral schools and elite education in general.

Possibilities and duties of Hungarian higher education

The strategic analysis delivered by *Ádám Kiss* was followed by presentations on disciplines and study programs considered to be the most suitable for the introduction of two-tier education. Speakers reviewed the situation of technical, business, agricultural, teacher-training and health education and potential scenarios of transformation.

István Páczelt and *Dezső Sima* discussed the potentials for introducing two-tier training from the perspective of university-level and college-level technical education, respectively.

Subsequently, the issue was reviewed by *Károly Barakonyi* and *Judit Szennyessy*, who represented university-level and college-level business education.

Péter Szendrő analysed agricultural higher education, *Mihály Mózes* outlined the potential ways of a uniform teacher training, and *László Muszbek* introduced models for the transformation of health education into a two-tier system.

Most speakers agreed that the system of two-tier higher education can be introduced in certain disciplines, but its implementation requires utmost care and differentiation. In addition to highlighting opportunities, speakers also described the efforts their institutions have made in this field.

Speakers representing the user side included *Lajos Ficzer* (Higher Education and Research Council), *József Mecsi* (professional chambers), *Pál Michelberger*, (Confederation of Natural and Technical Science Associations) and *László Romics* (Confederation of Hungarian Medical Science Associations). Student interests were presented by *Kornél Almássy*, representative of the National Union of Students in Hungary. The Hungarian Rectors' Conference, the Hungarian College Directors' Conference and the Chair of Art University Rectors delegated *Árpád Balogh* to the event.

In the last presentation, *András Róna-Tas* introduced the expected structure of Hungarian higher education in 2006.

*Compiled by
Zsolt Almási*

Information Day

Organised by the Ministry of Education and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee on 20 June 2001

The Information Day was organised by the Ministry of Education and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee for the second time. It aims to provide an annual forum where the two organising institutions can meet Hungarian stakeholders in order to discuss the hottest issues of higher education, share information and promote common thinking.

Pál Michelberger: HAC and Quality Evaluation

The first round of institutional accreditation was concluded in 2000. The second round – required also because of the integration of higher education institutions completed in the meantime – is about to be launched. HAC will also perform monitoring programmes ordered by its former resolutions. The visiting committees participating in these programmes will process the annual reports of institutions. These annual reports should be focused summary reports providing information also on the status of internal quality assurance. HAC offers assistance and guidelines for the compilation of annual reports.

The provisional accreditation of doctoral schools has also taken place. The deadline for submitting applications for final accreditation is 15 September, while applications for the establishment of new doctoral schools are accepted on an ongoing basis. Doctoral schools should operate as scientific workshops where teaching staff and PhD students work together on research projects.

Besides doctoral schools, HAC needs to provide advice also on the appointment of university and college professors. The received 200 applications were processed by a special committee, and proposals were finalised by the Plenum. HAC's Plenum supported two-thirds of the applications (i.e. one-third were not supported). Decisions were communicated in the form of a written statement both to the Ministry of Education and to the institution in question. The task was rather difficult as HAS (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) doctoral and membership titles could not be required in a mechanical manner. The underlying performance had to be evaluated for each and every applicant. Although one-third of applicants did not possess a HAS doctoral title, the committee supported their appointment to professorship based on their performance. The group of those with a HAS

doctoral title also included some applicants whose applications were not supported by HAC. Based on the accumulated experience, the process is currently being improved and fine-tuned, and the related opinions are being reconciled. The evaluation of professors with a full-time employee status at more than one institution marks a problematic issue.

HAC's strategy plans large-scale improvement in three fields. First, HAC considers the enhancement of stakeholder service a key priority. Second, it intends to monitor actions taken by foreign institutions with an impact on Hungarian higher education. Finally, HAC is committed to supporting higher education institutions in implementing their quality assurance systems.

Ádám Kiss: Players Involved in Quality Management; Quality Policy Tasks in Light of the Bologna Declaration

Players involved in quality management in a breakdown by task:

- quality policy must be developed and supervised by the Ministry of Education;
- quality must be certified by HAC;
- quality assurance must be ensured by higher education institutions;
- quality evaluation must be performed by users and the Ministry of Education

The tasks of quality policy:

1. create a flexible higher education;
2. ensure cost effectiveness;
3. assert public interests;
4. respond to rapid changes;
5. ensure equal chances including the provision of student loans;
6. support the broad-based implementation of quality assurance.

Institutions are required to establish their quality assurance systems by 31 December 2001. The Ministry of Education suggested that they should focus on the following three areas when developing this system:

- partner-group approach (evaluation by students; career path analysis of young graduates to better identify programme-related needs);
- statistics covering all components of quality assurance (not only professional issues but also management, administration, infrastructure, leisure time activities, student advice);

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

- improvement of educational work (identify the strengths and weaknesses of every degree programme).

Based on this, the institutions need to prepare an *annual report*. Organisational units must be reviewed, and reports need to be developed at several levels, depending on the size of the institution.

Funding must also be based on quality. It should consider the quality of training (currently, it is based on the number of staff members with a scientific degree and the number of PhD students), research capacity (applications submitted for planned tasks, inter-institutional co-operation) and elite programmes (doctoral schools, Academic Student League /TDK/ activities etc.).

András Róna-Tas: “Bologna” and the Hungarian Higher Education

Transnational mass education and the market entry of non-European institutions and accreditation agencies require pan-European answers.

The Bologna process aims to provide these answers, and facilitate adjustment to the new environment. The Sorbonne Declaration and the Ministers’ Summit in Prague mark the major milestones of this process. The next event will take place in Berlin in 2003.

To prepare the “Berlin Declaration”, the Hungarian party needs to

- develop basic principles for qualification requirements in 2001 (ensure EU compatibility);
- develop qualification requirements for the various programme groups indicating credits in 2002;
- standardise degrees (uniform structure, recognition of credits);
- ensure the equivalence of the different forms of education;
- develop conditions for transnational education (foreign institutions in Hungary);
- develop quality assurance methods and ensure quality.

András Róna-Tas: Accreditation Requirements for Doctoral Schools

The new requirements include only minor adjustments relative to the previous version.

HAC provides the requirements in advance, but – as quality can in no way be quantified – it maintains the right of consideration. Consideration is performed by peers.

Information on the *HAC procedure*:

- The Doctoral Committee consists of members of the Academy.
- Doctoral schools are required to prepare a self-evaluation report including information on the composition of teaching staff, operation, infrastructure, dissertations and the labour market opportunities of students;
- HAC prepares a statement on the doctoral school. Based on the survey completed to date, two-thirds of applicants were found acceptable by international standards. At one-third of applicants the following major problems were detected. First, the given field undergoes a critical period, and there are no experts of appropriate quality – in such cases, HAC prepares a statement but the issue must be resolved by the institution itself. Second, the doctoral school was established by a “forced marriage”, and it fails to reach the required standards (the parties focused on formal compliance) – these schools will be very exhaustively scrutinised during the final accreditation.

In some cases, quality can be certified on the basis of the self-evaluation report. In other cases a thorough survey (potentially involving also a foreign expert) is required. At the end of the procedure, HAC decides whether quality is adequate, to be improved or inadequate.

Katalin Rádli: Co-operation between the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education and Research Council and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee

When a new degree programme is established, the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education and Research Council and the Hungarian Accreditation organisations co-operate in the following manner:

- the Ministry of Education observes legal aspects (e.g. whether there is a similar degree programme already running, whether the institution has an undergraduate degree programme that wants to launch a complementary degree programme etc.);
- the Higher Education and Research Council reviews the new development in its entire structure including cost-effectiveness and geographical issues;
- new specialised postgraduate programmes of the old type cannot be launched starting from 2001, existing courses need to be transformed into newly accepted specialised postgraduate programmes;
- when training is provided in inter-institutional co-operation, the degree may be issued only by an institution properly authorised to do so;
- when a new degree programme is launched, the relevant credit regulations also need to be specified;

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

- when a degree programme under the competence of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or the Ministry of Health Affairs is to be launched, the preliminary advice of these two bodies must be attached to the application;
- following HAC evaluation, the Ministry of Education initiates negotiations with other competent ministries, which may lead to changes in qualification requirements;
- the preliminary accreditation for the Hungary-based courses of a foreign institution includes special requirements which are outlined in a tripartite agreement;
- HAC has an obligation to review off-site training programmes, new off-site programmes are evaluated also by the Higher Education and Research Council;
- when a specialised postgraduate training programme or an accredited vocational higher education programme is launched, the sole responsibility rests with the institution (the launch of such programmes needs to be reported and quality evaluation is performed by HAC in the institutional accreditation process conducted every eight years);
- when submitting applications for the launch of a degree programme, applicants are required to consult the list of preferred professional areas;
- only degree programmes accredited by HAC may be included in the information booklet for college/university applicants (degrees should be unambiguous because inappropriately issued degrees may cause serious misunderstandings).

Nóra Halmai: Institutional Accreditation by HAC

If an organisation plans to establish or launch a new degree programme, set up a new faculty or institution, it needs to file a *preliminary accreditation request* with the Ministry of Education.

The *regular review* of existing institutions, their faculties and degree programmes is initiated by HAC. The first accreditation cycle was completed on 30 June 2000. HAC recommended the suspension of very few operating programmes, however, monitoring procedures were required in many cases. Monitoring procedures were launched in autumn 2000.

The Higher Education Act requires that *off-site programmes and distance learning programmes* be subject to extraordinary accreditation. Such courses

must be reviewed by 30 June 2002. Procedures are also initiated by HAC in this case.

Notifications on monitoring procedures due in the coming academic year will be sent to institutions by HAC by mid-July. This notification includes the list of degree programmes to be evaluated. Based on this, the institution needs to prepare a *self-evaluation report* introducing changes (teaching staff, dissertations, exam questions) and major development projects that took place since the previous accreditation visit. The visiting committee focuses on four issues: curriculum, organisation, infrastructure and student feedback.

HAC needs four years to complete monitoring procedures and the revision of off-site and distance learning programmes. The deadline of these activities is the end of academic year 2003/2004.

*Compiled by
Zsolt Almási*

The Sixth Biennial Conference of INQAAHE

Bangalore (India), 19 to 22 March 2001

The conference organised by NAAC (*National Assessment and Accreditation Council*), the Indian member organisation of INQAAHE, in the capital of Karnataka State was attended by over 300 delegates from 47 countries (including about 150 delegates from India). Chile, Japan, Finland and South Africa delegated several representatives despite the large distance, and even small countries such as Botswana and Jamaica were represented. This demonstrates active worldwide interest in quality assurance in higher education. European representation reflected the traditional weight of the continent in quality assurance. The conference was attended by several prominent and recognised European *experts*, but some European countries with an INQAAHE member organisation (Austria, France, Germany) did not send a delegate. Central and Eastern Europe had a strong representation: Poland delegated four people, Russia and Hungary three each, while Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia sent one person each. (Hungary was represented by *László Filep* from the *Nyíregyháza College* as well as dr. Gabriella Homonnay and Tibor Szántó from HAC).

The Indian venue determined not only the composition of the audience but also the style of implementation. The inauguration address was delivered by *S.M. Krishna*, Honourable Chief Minister of Karnataka State, in the presence of several government officials. The opening ceremony followed Indian traditions and included formalities a bit theatrical for the European observer. Following the opening ceremony, the Chief Minister gave a banquet accompanied by traditional Indian music for the participants in the building of the National Parliament. The opening event and the conference received publicity in the local media.

The plenary sessions and section meetings of the conference included about 70 presentations under the summary title "*Quality, Standards and Recognition*". This report obviously cannot cover all presentations, partly because most of them were delivered at parallel section meetings. To facilitate the review of conference materials, organisers published a booklet (and its CD-ROM version) including all presentations. The paragraphs to follow introduce some major presentations delivered at the conference.

The keynote address was delivered on the topic of standards by *John Randall* (QAA, UK). He highlighted four factors to be considered upon the evaluation of

higher education quality: the outcome, the curriculum, student performance and the realisation of institutional objectives. To ensure comparability and the use of internationally accepted standards, the parties should focus on the **outcomes of the education process** (the acquired knowledge and skills) in the first place. Citing the example of mathematicians working at stock exchanges, Mr. Randall emphasised the importance of multi-purpose, transferable skills. Internationally co-ordinated and accepted standards are necessary to facilitate the mutual recognition of national quality evaluation and accreditation systems and to ensure the quality compliance of transnational education.

The comments and questions following this presentation dealt with the relationship between modern market needs and the traditional academic values of higher education. In his response, Mr. Randall admitted the importance of labour market aspects, and stressed the necessity of diversity in higher education.

The keynote address gave a good introduction to the presentation prepared by *András Róna-Tas* which was delivered at a section meeting by *Tibor Szántó*. Mr. Szántó made three major points:

1. The quality of a country's higher education can be measured by the degree at which it can contribute to the quality of life of graduates and the society at large.
2. Market success is not the exclusive – and not always the appropriate – measure of education quality.
3. The quality of a given higher education system can be identified by e.g. the Employment Opportunity Model which considers the types of positions that can be filled by a graduate student, the number of positions available within the individual types, the obtainable income level and quality of life.

The presentation had a favourable reception with the audience.

At another section meeting, *Ton Vroeijenstijn* (VSNU, Holland), the Secretary of INQAAHE, introduced a different model for evaluating the quality of higher education institutions. His model, however, was more general in nature and aimed to review and evaluate the overall activity of the institution under survey. It classified institutional activities into three major groups: training, research and services. This type of evaluation focuses on the analysis of the mission statement, short- and long-term objectives, expected and actual results. It covers the assessment of inputs, processes and outcomes in all three activity-groups. The operative aspects of the model, however, were not discussed either in the verbal or in the printed presentation (e.g. the way to identify labour market and social satisfaction based on the model). There are several SWOT analyses currently

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

underway based on this model. The presentation also mentioned a manual prepared about the model in South Africa.

The other major topic of the conference agenda, the mutual recognition of degrees and certificates, was also covered by several presentations. The morning plenary session of the closing day chaired by Ton Vroeijenstijn included presentations on this issue by *Mala Singh* (South Africa), *Wai Sum Wong* (Hong Kong, China), *Marjorie Peace Lenn* (USA) and *R.S. Nirjar* (India). The major conclusion of the panel discussion featuring many Indian contributions was that although the mutual recognition of degrees, national quality evaluation agencies and their certificates must be based on generally approved standards and criteria. These standards and criteria should not, however, be exclusive in nature, but should ensure the assertion of national and regional features, community and cultural aspects. It would be practical to base mutual recognition on national accreditation systems which should mutually recognise each other, said Ton Vroeijenstijn in his closing address. INQAAHE may assume a more active, supporting, catalytic role in this process, he added.

The presentation of *Pál Michelberger* and *dr. Gabriella Homonnay* (delivered by Mrs. Homonnay) was directly related to this topic: the mutual recognition of higher education studies and degrees with special respect to technical higher education. The authors identified three types of recognition. The first type is the **official recognition** meaning the equivalence of degrees issued in different countries. The second type is the **professional recognition** given by non-governmental institutions, chambers, trade associations (e.g. the “Euro Engineer” certificate issued by FEANI). The third type is the **academic recognition** granted to each other by institutions (e.g. CESAER, an organisation established by leading European engineer training institutions).

Many other presentations focused on national or institutional quality assurance systems. *László Filep* delivered a presentation on the necessity to co-ordinate external evaluation, general national criteria, internal quality assurance and institution-specific features. Interesting presentations were given on the identification of users in higher education (*Maria Jose Lemaitre* and *Dagmar Raczyński*, Chile), the mutual recognition of national quality evaluation agencies (*Arumugham Gnanam* and *Antony Stella*, India), and the involvement of for-profit market organisations in higher education (*Marjorie Peace Lenn*, USA).

Participants also had parallel discussions in four geographic groups where delegates from the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia discussed region-specific

issues. The meeting of the European section was chaired by *Christian Thune*, Director of the National Evaluation Agency of Denmark and President of ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance). (ENQA was established by the quality assurance agencies of EU countries upon the initiative of the European Commission in March 2000.) Mr. Thune invited associate EU member states, including Hungary, to participate in the next General Meeting of ENQA to be held in Brussels in May 2001. This General Meeting will confirm the membership of the representative of Central and Eastern European countries in ENQA's executive board. He raised the opportunity of closer co-operation between ENQA and CEE INQAAHE (Central and East European International Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education) established in Budapest in November 2000.

The issue of European accreditation was also on the agenda. In this field, CRE is the most active player. (In April 2001, CRE and CEURC merged under the name *European University Association*.) Within a related CRE project, *Andrée Sursock* prepared a study on potential scenarios. In addition to the report on this project, the Ministers' Summit to be held in Prague in May 2001 will probably also discuss a proposal to be drafted by ENQA.

Geographic group discussions also touched upon the establishment of regional subnetworks. Quality assurance agencies in Africa, Asia and Central America consider the establishment of subnetworks similar to the one recently set up in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Bangalore event hosted also the General Meeting of INQAAHE. Following the approval of the memorandum of the meeting held in Chile two years ago, the President (*David Woodhouse*), the Secretary (*Ton Vroeijerstijn*), and the Treasurer (*Richard Lewis*) gave their reports. The planned minor amendment of INQAAHE's Constitution was removed from the agenda because member organisations did not receive a timely notification. Based on the votes received from member organisations earlier this year, the composition of the new INQAAHE Board was introduced: President – *Maria Jose Lemaitre* (Chile), Secretary – *Ton Vroeijerstijn* (Holland). Members of the Board: *Marjorie Peace Lenn* (USA), *Juan Carlos Pugliese* (Argentina), *John Randall* (UK), *Mala Singh* (South Africa), *Wai Sum Wong* (Hong Kong, China). At the first *Board* meeting held the same day, the Board co-opted *Ethley London* (Jamaica) and *Biruta Mockiene* (Lithuania) among its members to ensure appropriate regional representation. Based on the secret ballot of full-fledged member organisations represented at the General Meeting, the next conference of INQAAHE will be held in 2003 in Ireland. In the interim period (in May 2002), Jamaica will

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

organise a lower-profile workshop meeting similar to the one held in Budapest in May 2000.

The major findings of the conference were summarised by an outgoing Board member *Jacques l'Ecuyer* (Canada) at the closing plenary session of the conference. He highlighted two points: quality assurance in higher education must focus on ongoing quality improvement; comparable standards should be developed paying special attention to the outcomes of the education process.

In her closing address, *Maria Jose Lemaitre*, the new President of INQAAHE, thanked for members' confidence and promised to continue ongoing projects. In line with this, the four workgroups established in Budapest in May 2000 will carry on efforts in the following areas: standards, INQAAHE network information, quality attributes/accreditation practice, mutual recognition. A fifth workgroup needs to be established to review various higher education degrees.

No doubt, the *outcomes* of the education process deserve special attention, and the knowledge and skills acquired by graduate students need to be identified and, if possible, also measured when evaluating the quality of higher education. Upon the development of suitable measurement tools, internationally accepted and widely used quality criteria, i.e. *standards*, however, *flexibility* is essential to observe special regional, national and perhaps also institutional features. Higher education must preserve its *diversity* and it should not be confined to serving short-term market needs and narrow-based professional interests. Higher education has historically had a noble mission: to train not only professionals but also people capable of thinking and acting in a responsible and committed manner to safeguard important social and cultural values.

*Compiled by
Tibor R. Szántó*

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee

HAC members delegated as of 1 January 2001

Name	Degree	Delegated by
Pál Michelberger <i>mechanical engineer</i>	President f. m. HAS	Confederation of Societies of Technical and Natural Sciences
Károly Bakó <i>metallurgical engineer</i>	CSc	User community
Csanád Bálint <i>arceheologist</i>	c. m. HAS	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Zoltán Bedő <i>plant breeder</i>	DSc	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Dénes Dudits <i>biologist</i>	f. m. HAS	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
László Györfi <i>mathematician</i>	f. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
György Hajós <i>chemist</i>	DSc	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Zoltán Izsáki <i>agricultural engineer</i>	CSc	Hungarian College Directors' Conference
János Kollár <i>physicist</i>	DSc	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Miklós Laczkovich <i>mathematician</i>	f. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Sándor Magda <i>agricultural economist</i>	DSc	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Gábor Makara <i>doctor of medicine</i>	c. m. HAS	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
József Mecsi <i>civil engineer</i>	PhD	User community
Ernö Mészáros <i>meteorologist</i>	f. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Gyula Mészáros <i>economist</i>	CSc	User community

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Mihály Mózes <i>teacher of history and Hungarian language and literature</i>	PhD	Hungarian College Directors' Conference
László Muszbek <i>doctor of medicine</i>	f. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
István Páczelt <i>mechanical engineer</i>	f. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Éva Polyánszky <i>chemical engineer</i>	CSc	user community
János Rechnitzer <i>economist</i>	DSc	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Géza Sáska <i>education researcher</i>	CSc	User community
Dezső Sima <i>electrical engineer</i>	CSc	Hungarian College Directors' Conference
Zoltán Sipos <i>economist</i>	CSc	Hungarian College Directors' Conference
László Sólyom <i>lawyer</i>	c. m. HAS	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Zoltán Szász <i>historian</i>	CSc	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences
Júlia Szekeres <i>doctor of medicine</i>	DSc	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Judit Szennyessy <i>economist</i>	CSc	Hungarian College Directors' Conference
Ernő Taxner <i>literary historian</i>	DSc	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Ferenc Vámosy <i>architect</i>	DSc	Chair of Art University Rectors
Péter Závodszy, <i>biophysicist</i>	c. m. HAS	Research Institutes of the Hung. Academy of Sciences

Permanent invited members

Dávid Kovács <i>PhD student</i>		National Union of Students
Attila Dobozy <i>doctor of medicine</i>	c. m. HAS	Council of Higher Education and Research
György Bazsa <i>chemist</i>	DSc	National Doctoral and Habilitation Council

Non-voting members

András Róna-Tas <i>honorary president</i>	f. m. HAS	Linguistics
János Bolyki	prof. emeritus	Theology
János Kelemen	DSc	Philosophy
István Kenesei	DSc	Linguistics
Miklós Kengyel	CSc	Law
I. Gábor Kovács	CSc	Sociology
Csaba Pléh	c. m. HAS	Psychology
Róbert Tuschák	f. m. HAS	Electrical engineering
Gyula Ungvár	DSc	Military science

List of abbreviations:

f.m. HAS = full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

c.m. HAS = corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

DSc = Doctor of sciences (Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

CSc = Candidate of sciences (equivalent to PhD degree)

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(as of 1 January 2001)

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Functional and Expert Committees

Expert Committees for Programme Accreditation

- 1010 Committee of Mathematics and Computing Sciences
- 1020 Committee of Physical Sciences
- 1030 Committee of Earth and Environmental Sciences
- 1040 Committee of Biological Sciences
- 1050 Committee of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Traffic Engineering
- 1060 Committee of Electrical Engineering
- 1070 Committee of Material Sciences and Technologies, Mechanical Engineering, Military Technology and Agricultural Technology
- 1080 Committee of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
- 1090 Committee of Information Technology
- 2010 Committee of Medical Sciences
- 2020 Committee of Agricultural Sciences
- 3010 Committee of Business Administration, Management and Economic Sciences
- 3020 Committee of Law and Political Sciences
- 3030 Committee of Sociology
- 3040 Committee of Military Sciences
- 3050 Committee of History, Ethnography, Cultural Anthropology, Art and Cultural History
- 3060 Committee of Philosophical Sciences
- 3070 Committee of Educational and Sport Sciences
- 3080 Committee of Psychological Sciences
- 3090 Committee of Literature, Media and Communication Sciences
- 3100 Committee of Linguistics
- 3110 Committee of Arts and Doctoral Training of Arts

Functional Committees

- 4010 Distance Learning Committee
- Strategic Committee
- User Committee
- Committee in charge of Doctoral Schools
- Committee in charge of Professors' Appointments
- Ad Hoc Committees

The International Advisory Board of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee

At two consecutive plenary meetings, in October and November 2001, the HAC voted on the members of its next International Advisory Board. The Board has ten members and is invited for a three-year term.

The task of the Board, as set down in Section 29 of the Government Decree regulating the HAC and its operation, is as follows.

"(2) The main task of the Board is to evaluate and advise on the operational principles, rules of procedure, and the accreditation criteria and practice of the HAC, especially from the point of view of conformity with international requirements.

(3) The members of the Board shall be informed of the HAC's work on a regular basis. The Board meet as needed but at least once a year."

In the past the Board has convened for a dinner and a one-day meeting once a year on a weekend in spring. At the annual meeting the Board reviews the work of the HAC in the foregoing year and makes recommendations to the HAC. Additionally, the HAC may consult Board members on specific issues, such as to suggest experts to evaluate applications by higher education institutions to start study programs or doctoral schools, or to recommend peer reviewers for institutional evaluation.

The elected Board members are

- Ferdinand *Devinsky*, Slovakia, rector of Comenius University in Bratislava, standing member of the European University Association (EUA) institutional evaluation program, vice-president of the Danube Rectors' Conference;
- Judith *Eaton*, U.S.A., president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, member of the external panel which reviewed the HAC in 2000;
- Stein A. *Evensen*, Norway, MD, dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Oslo;
- Suzy *Halimi*, France, former rector of Sorbonne Nouvelle and advisor for higher education at the Ministry for Higher Education and Research;
- Inge *Jonsson*, Sweden, former rector of Stockholm University and until the end of 2001 president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities;

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

- John *Kelly*, Ireland, former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, later Registrar of University College Dublin, member of the European University Association (EUA) Steering Committee for the Institutional Evaluation Program;
- Klaus *Landfried*, Germany, president of the German Rectors Conference;
- Ossi V. *Lindqvist*, Finland, former rector of the University of Kuopio, chairman of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council;
- Jacob *Scheele*, Inspectorate of Higher Education, The Netherlands, formerly a member of the World Bank International Advisory Panel reviewing Hungarian higher education reform;
- Christian *Thune*, Denmark, executive director of the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA), chairman of the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), member of the external panel which reviewed the HAC in 2000.

Inge Jonsson has been a member of the Board since its first term, and Suzy Halimi since the last term.

Accreditation in 2000

Institutions

Baptist Theological Academy
Loránd Eötvös University of Arts and Sciences
Gábor Dénes College
Imre Haynal University of Health Sciences
Gáspár Károli Calvinist Academy
János Kodolányi College
András Pető Institute for Teaching and Teacher Training for the Handicapped
International Business School (IBS)
National Institute for the Training of Rabbis – Jewish University
Pápa Reformed Theological College
Semmelweis University of Medicine
Sola Scriptura Seminary and Theological College
John Wesley Pastor Training College
Miklós Zrínyi University for National Defence

Degree Programmes

Termination of Graduate Degree Programme in Security Engineering
Distance Learning Programme in Public Education Management, Budapest
University of Technical and Economic Sciences
Graduate Degree Programme in Law, Debrecen University
Degree Programmes holding a provisional launching permit at the Faculty of
Arts and Humanities of the Gáspár Károli Calvinist Academy
Degree Programme in Theology of St. Bernard Cistercian Theological College
in Érd
Distance Learning Programme in Human Resources Management, St. Stephen
University
Distance Learning Programmes at the College Faculty of Business
Management and Agriculture

Resolutions

Resolution no. 2000/6/V/1

Evaluation principles and procedure of appointing university and college professors

I. Requirements for the appointment of university and college professors

{As per Subsection (4) of Section 17 of the Higher Education Act}, such persons can be appointed to university professor who/whose

- a) satisfy the requirements of working as a teaching staff member or researcher at a higher education institution {i.e., as per Subsection (1) of Section 14 of the Higher Education Act, hold a university degree; have no criminal record and have an unlimited capacity to act; satisfy the requirements set for the institution's teaching staff members, researchers or artists (to the extent required by the position)}; and
- b) have a Ph. D. degree and habilitation;
- c) are able to deliver a lecture in a foreign language;
- d) educational, scientific or artistic activities have proven their ability to manage the studies, as well as scientific and/or artistic efforts of students, Ph. D. students and teaching assistants;
- e) scientific research or artistic performance is of outstanding quality;
- f) achievements are recognised by the relevant national and international science or art communities;
- g) have an outstanding ability of intellectual leadership and innovation.

Regarding the applicant's appointment to university professor, the following achievements shall be considered as outstanding research or artistic performance:

- ◆ being a doctor of Hungarian academy of Sciences, or
- ◆ in exceptional cases, proof of an equivalent scientific or artistic achievement, or
- ◆ being the author of an outstanding piece of literature (or art).

{As per Subsection (2) of Section 18 of the Higher Education Act}, such persons can be appointed to college professors who/whose

- a) satisfy the requirements of working as a teaching staff member or researcher at a higher education institution {i.e., as per Subsection (1) of Section 14 of the Higher Education Act, hold a university degree; have no criminal record and have an unlimited capacity to act; satisfy the requirements set for the

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

institution's teaching staff members, researchers or artists (to the extent required by the position)); and

- h) have a Ph. D. degree and habilitation;
- b) are able to deliver a lecture in a foreign language;
- i) educational, scientific or artistic activities have proven their ability to manage the studies, as well as scientific and/or artistic efforts of students and teaching assistants;
- j) scientific research or artistic performance is of outstanding quality;
- c) achievements are recognised by the relevant national and international science or art communities;

Regarding the applicant's appointment to college professor, the following achievements shall be considered as outstanding research or artistic performance: Professional or artistic achievements satisfying the given area's requirements. A professional career of at least 10 years in the given area is required. See *Attachment 1* for HAC's evaluation criteria to be used when judging the proposed appointment of university and college professors.

II. Application system

II.1. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

Documents required for the evaluation procedure:

1. Application
2. Curriculum vitae
3. Bibliographic data of the 10 most significant publications of the past 10 years, or detailed documentation of the most significant works of art created in the past 10 years
4. The university/college evaluation committee's minutes of meeting (if the committee performed a preliminary evaluation)
5. Copies of documents requested by the Ministry of Education

The application documents shall be submitted to HAC in six copies.

II. 2. CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

The applicant must credibly prove that he/she fulfils

- ◆ the statutory requirements of being appointed to university professor, as described under I. a) – g) above (in the case of an application for a university professor's position);

- ◆ the statutory requirements of being appointed to college professor, as described under I. a) – e) above (in the case of an application for a college professor's position).

III. Organisational structure and procedures of the Evaluation Committee
(hereinafter referred to as *Committee*)

III. 1. *THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITY*

Upon the request of a higher education institution or the Ministry of Education, the Committee shall evaluate applications for the position of university or college professors, and submit a draft resolution to HAC's Plenum. In its draft resolution, the Committee shall explain its decision to support or not to support the application.

III.2. *THE COMMITTEE'S COMPOSITION*

1. The Committee's chairman and members shall be Plenum members. Universities and colleges shall have an equal representation among the members of the Committee. Plenum members shall accept their nomination to Committee members.
2. In justified cases, the Committee's chairman shall invite one or two representatives of the given area to the Committee's meeting. Invited representatives shall attend the meeting as non-voting participants with a right of consultation.

III. 3. *ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS*

1. The person of the Committee's chairman shall be proposed by the president of HAC, after consulting with HAC vice presidents and members.
2. The Plenum shall elect the chairman in a secret ballot, with a simple majority of ("yes" or "no") votes. Should the ballot fail, a new proposal shall be submitted at the Plenum's next session.
3. The Committee's members shall be proposed by the chairman, after consulting with the Presidium of HAC.
4. The Plenum shall elect the members in a secret ballot, with a simple majority of ("yes" or "no") votes. Should the ratio of "yes" votes for a certain candidate fail to reach 50%, a new proposal shall be submitted at the Plenum's next session.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

5. The Committee's chairman and members shall be invited to join the Committee by the president of HAC. The assignment shall be effective until the end of a member's Plenum membership.
6. If a Committee member's Plenum membership is terminated, a new Committee member shall be elected as described under III.3.

III. 4. THE COMMITTEE'S OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. The Committee convenes when necessary (as required by the number and urgency of cases).
2. A Committee meeting shall be convened by the Committee's chairman sending to members an invitation, including the proposed agenda, the applications to be decided, and the opinion (without the reasons) of those who anonymously evaluated the applications. The Chairman shall ensure that members receive the above documents at least five days before the session's date.
3. The anonymous evaluation of the cases on the agenda shall be available to members for review during the Committee's meeting.
4. A conflict of interest emerges if a Committee member is
 - a) a relative of the applicant (cf. Civil Code, Subsection b of Section 685),
 - b) employed by the same institution as the applicant, or
 - c) unable to judge the given case in an unbiased manner for any other reason.Conflicts of interest shall be reported by the Committee member affected.
5. Committee members in conflict of interest may not participate in the discussion and voting about the application.
6. Voting procedure:

The Committee shall decide about an appointment in a secret ballot, with a *simple majority* of ("yes" or "no") votes.

Members entitled to vote:

 - a) Committee members representing universities shall vote about the appointment of university professors.
 - b) Committee members representing colleges shall vote about the appointment of college professors.

In the case of a tie vote (i.e. equal number of "yes" and "no" votes), the chairman shall also vote, and his/her vote shall be decisive.

Quorum prerequisite: the presence of more than 50% of those entitled to vote (including the chairman).
7. Each Committee meeting shall be minuted. The minutes shall be signed by the Committee's chairman, or, in the case of his/her absence or conflict of interest, by the acting chairman appointed by the chairman.

IV. Evaluation*IV. 1. EVALUATION PROCEDURE*

- 1) Applications shall be forwarded to the president of HAC for evaluation either by the head of the institution that issued it, or by the Minister of Education.
- 2) Within two weeks from an application's receipt by HAC's Secretariat, the Secretariat shall examine whether the application satisfies all formal requirements set by HAC. If it does not, the secretary general of HAC shall, in agreement with the Committee chairman, return the application (five copies of it) with a list of deficiencies, to the party requesting the evaluation. The evaluation procedure shall be suspended until all formal requirements are fully met.
- 3) Applications satisfying HAC's formal requirements shall be forwarded by the secretary general to the Committee's chairman. The Committee shall make its decision taking into consideration written proposals by at least two external experts.
- 4) External experts:
 - a. Within two weeks of the receipt of the application, the Committee's chairman shall recommend external experts to evaluate the application. If necessary, the chairman shall consult HAC's or the Committee's members competent in the given discipline. Foreign experts may also be invited if necessary; in this case, a foreign-language copy of the application shall be submitted to HAC.
 - b. External experts shall remain anonymous and their identification shall not be revealed to third parties. Only their identification code (and not their name) shall be indicated on related documents.
 - c. Experts' opinions shall be accessible to Committee members only and shall not be revealed to third parties.
 - d. Experts' opinions shall be prepared within two calendar weeks.
 - e. In the case of a material discrepancy between the two experts' opinion, a third expert's opinion shall be requested.
5. Although the Committee shall consider expert opinions when making its decision, the Committee shall not be bound by them.
6. The Committee shall submit to the Plenum a draft resolution regarding its decision. In addition the decision, this resolution shall also include the Committee's explanation for its decision and the share of "yes" and "no" votes.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

No personal data received by the officers participating in an application's evaluation (external experts, Committee members, Plenum members) and the Secretariat's staff shall be disclosed to any third party.

IV.2. DECISION-MAKING BY THE PLENUM

1. The Evaluation Committee's resolution shall be submitted to the Plenum by the Committee's chairman.
2. The Plenum shall decide in a secret ballot, with a simple majority of ("yes" or "no") votes.
3. The president of HAC shall notify the party requesting the evaluation (the head of an institution or the Minister of Education) of HAC's final resolution and the reasons for it.

Deadline for preparing the evaluation: three months from the application's receipt by HAC's Secretariat, provided that the application fully satisfies all formal requirements set by HAC.

Procedure if HAC's resolution is appealed:

The Plenum's resolution may be appealed only in the case of non-compliance with the rules of procedure or the requirements. In this case, a new procedure shall be launched in the same application period.

Appeals referring to non-compliance with the rules of procedure or requirements shall be addressed to the Minister of Education and submitted to HAC's president. The president shall forward the appeal to the Minister.

The appeal shall describe how HAC infringed pertaining regulations, i.e. it shall specify which provision(s) of a legal regulation or section(s) of HAC's by-laws were violated by the decision-making procedure, and/or how the detailed rules of procedure or requirements were disregarded.

The Minister of Education, responsible for ensuring compliance with legal regulations, may call upon HAC's president to rectify the issue.

- a) HAC shall investigate the case described by the Minister by the specified deadline. Depending on the issue raised by the Minister, HAC's president shall request a statement from one or more of the following bodies:
- i) the Legal committee, and/or
 - ii) the By-Law Committee (a Special Committee in charge of issues related to HAC's operation and the performance of its responsibilities), and/or
 - iii) the committee providing support for decision-making, and/or
 - iv) the Presidium.
- b) HAC's president shall notify the Minister of Education of the resolution related to the investigated case. The resolution shall also include the reasons for the decision.

Resolution no. 2000/5/III/2

Monitoring procedures and the evaluation of off-site training

- The amended Higher Education Act of 1999 requires that off-site training courses be subject to the permission of the Minister of Education. Pursuant to Subsection (7) of Section 125 of the Act, the deadline for the accreditation of existing off-site training courses⁵ is 30 June 2002.
- HAC resolutions concerning the first evaluations stipulate monitoring procedures for certain degree programmes. The deadline for the procedure's completion is described in the Plenum's relevant resolution.
- Pursuant to HAC resolution no. 1999/8/VII/4, existing off-site training courses are evaluated in line with the rules of monitoring procedures.

A monitoring procedure is required in one of the following three cases:

- no degrees were issued at the time of the evaluation, so evaluation must be completed,
- the evaluation identified deficiencies that can be corrected, and the correction must be verified,

⁵ The Ministry of Education issued a circular dated 1 December 1999, requesting institutions to report off-site training courses planned to have accredited by 31 December. Based on institutions' responses received by 31 December 1999, the Office of the Ministry's Deputy State Secretary in charge of higher education prepared and sent to HAC a list of existing off-site training courses and courses to be accredited by 30 June 2002.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

- a degree programme running outside the sites specified in the list¹ of the Ministry of Education must be evaluated⁶.

Resolutions concerning the procedure

1. Off-site forms of training may be accredited (*supplement to resolution no. 1999/8/VII/4*) if:

- the degree program's launching permit is already available,
- the off-site training programme satisfies HAC's degree programme accreditation requirements including those related to quality⁷, and
- full-time training is already underway in the given degree programme at the institution or at one of its faculties; or (*proposed amendment*) if no such training is offered on-site, then a separate review needs to be launched to check whether it is justified to offer the training programme off the site.

If the Ministry's list¹ includes a degree programme (and the site of training is also specified) that received a rating of "Strong" or higher upon HAC's first evaluation at that specific site, the training at that site is to be regarded as accredited.

2. The monitoring procedure's evaluation result is based on

- 2.1. the Plenum's resolution about the degree programme's first evaluation (as a basis of comparison),
- 2.2. the degree programme's self-evaluation⁸ underlying the annual reports,
- 2.3. on-site visits (if necessary).

⁶ The Ministry's list of off-site training courses may include programmes for which the Plenum's accreditation resolution required the completion of a monitoring procedure.

⁷ See the year 1999 issue (vol. IV) of the Accreditation Newsletter: *Technical requirements and detailed guidelines*

⁸ As part of compiling the annual report required by Section 59 of the Higher Education Act, the **self-evaluation** of a degree programme shall be performed according to the programme's quality assessment criteria. Self-evaluation is completed for the institution's own purposes, and it serves as a background material to the annual report. However, HAC may request access to the results of self-evaluation when performing the external quality evaluation. (See the February 2000 guideline titled *HAC's accreditation procedure in consideration of annual reports*, and the 2 May 2000 circular to the institutions.) The degree programmes to be monitored in a given academic year shall forward to HAC their self-evaluation report when submitting their annual reports. (The self-evaluation report of degree programmes not subject to a monitoring procedure in a given academic year shall remain with the institutions.)

In case training is performed (also) off-site, the degree programme's self-evaluation must be completed for all sites of training.

3. Degree programmes accredited for a definite period

In the case of certain degree programmes, the accreditation deadline specified in the Plenum's resolution on the evaluation has already expired, or will have expired by the time of the monitoring procedure. For this reason, the following resolution is proposed:

If, as part of the first evaluation of an institution, the resolution made by HAC's Plenum stipulates a monitoring procedure for a degree programme with a deadline, training under the programme will continue until the conclusion of the monitoring procedure, even if the deadline is missed. The future of the degree programme shall be decided in the Plenum's new resolution.

4. Scheduling of monitoring procedures:

- 4.1. The monitoring procedures of all off-site training programmes indicated on the Ministry's list as of 31 December 1999¹ must be completed by 30 June 2002.
- 4.2. If monitoring procedures are required for several degree programmes of an institution, these procedures should be carried out at the same time (if possible), regardless of the fact whether the programmes are running off-site or to be monitored based on a HAC resolution. In the case of institutions with several faculties, this rule must be observed faculty by faculty.
- 4.3. The "**affected programmes**"⁹ of institutions providing off-site training and, in the case of multi-faculty institutions, those of faculties providing off-site training shall be monitored first.
- 4.4. Having satisfied the above 4.3 section, degree programmes of institutions providing no off-site training and those of faculties of multi-faculty institutions providing no off-site training should be monitored at the same time if possible. These monitoring procedures shall be scheduled to be completed by the deadlines specified in the Plenum's evaluation resolution.
- 4.5. The above scheduling rules shall invalidate the following provision of HAC resolution no. 1998/8/VII/5: "*The monitoring procedures required by the first round of evaluations shall be performed at institutions not subject to integration first.*"

⁹ "**affected programmes**": vocational off-site courses as well as degree programmes selected for a monitoring procedure by the Plenum resolution of the institution or its faculties providing off-site training.

The evaluation of off-site training programmes indicated on the Ministry's list¹, as well as programmes subject to a monitoring procedure by HAC, shall be scheduled by the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall notify the Plenum of the schedule at the subsequent meeting. At the same time, the Plenum has *withdrawn* resolution no. 1998/8/VII/5.

Resolution no. 2000/6/V/2

The relationship of university and college training

1) Quality requirements for university training complementing college training:

Additional training for 2-3 years and/or acquisition of the number of credit points required for university training, as determined by the competent committee.

Complementary training can only be provided under degree programmes holding a university-level launching permit and having an approved PhD programme in the relevant discipline, or whose research activities are acknowledged by HAC as outstanding, except for programmes belonging to sociology, where neither a PhD programme nor an outstanding research activity acknowledged by HAC is required.

2) Complementary training is not applicable for the following programmes:

- teacher training programmes, except for training in the given subject's area
- medicine, biology, law and sociology; European studies; pedagogy, philosophy, ethnography, political and environmental science programmes, because these are all provided as university programmes only.

3) The discontinuation of a university programme shall not automatically lead to obtaining a college degree, unless the national qualification requirements stipulate so. Otherwise, to obtain a college degree, "practical complementary training" is required, the length of which varies by programme (at least one year). Students must fulfil the programme's college-level qualification requirements.

**Passing opinions on applications for positions for
University and College Professors**

Section 81 Paragraph (2) j) of the September 2000 amendment to the Higher Education Act decrees that the HAC must state its opinion regarding applications for positions for university and college professors.

As soon as the amendment came into force the HAC developed detailed procedures and criteria for evaluating such applications (published in the HAC's Hungarian-language Accreditation Gazette 5/3 2000, pp. 55-70). Accordingly, the applications were evaluated first by two external experts and subsequently by the special committee set up for this purpose. Based on the recommendations of the committee the HAC passed its decisions by secret vote. The following table shows the types and numbers of decisions.

	Supported	Not supported	Withdrawn applications	New procedures	Total
University	89	49	2		140
College	38	20	1	2	61

With 69 rejected applications the institutions filed objections which led to the re-evaluation of 27 applications. In two cases the HAC revised its earlier decision and supported the application, while in five cases the Minister of Education, invoking his legal powers, made the appointments.

Looking back at the experiences gained from the first set of evaluations the HAC revised its criteria and procedures. They were published in Hungarian concurrently as a special edition of the Accreditation Gazette, as the 9th supplement to the HAC's By-Laws, and the HAC's website. (Excerpts will soon appear on the English website as well.) The official Gazette of the Ministry of Education and the Hungarian Gazette published them also.

Code of ethics

As members of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee and its Secretariat, we deem it important to lay down and publicly state our guiding principles of ethics. By doing so, we wish to provide guidance to our members regarding voluntary rules over and above legal regulations, on the one hand, and we aim to describe how an “ideal” HAC member would behave on the other. Thus, we wish to outline an *ethos* that distinguishes HAC as an ethical organisation and reflects its true intended role and mission to improve the quality of Hungary’s higher education.

This Code of Ethics describes the **values, principles and rules of conduct** that the Hungarian Accreditation Committee considers appropriate and **recommends** to its **Secretariat**, as well as its **members** (those sitting on the Plenum and expert committees). (Separate ethics guidelines should be developed for experts – visiting committee members and external evaluators – providing occasional contribution to HAC’s work.) Commitment to and unfailing compliance with these rules and values can ensure that HAC can perform its tasks (both the statutory ones and those specified by the organisation itself) to the satisfaction and appreciation of its stakeholders, as well as the legislators and the entire Hungarian society.

I. VALUES, PRINCIPLES, RULES

1. Values

In their work performed on behalf of HAC, all members of HAC and its Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as the Members) shall always honour the following **values**:

- lawfulness,
- independence,
- objectivity,
- impartiality,
- transparency,
- accountability (personal responsibility),
- well-preparedness and high professional standards,
- openness to innovation,

- harmonisation of the points of view of those involved.

In detail, commitment to the above values means the following.

In their work performed on behalf of HAC, Members shall

1.1. fully observe and comply with pertinent **laws and other legal regulations**, with special respect to the Higher Education Act and the Government Decree regulating the operation of HAC.

1.2. not “represent” their employer. If a Member is employed by a higher education institution or another organisation, he/she shall fully disassociate himself/herself from such a relationship(s), and shall formulate his/her statements **independently** of any such commitment.

1.3. strive for **objectivity** when making statements and expressing opinions, i.e. shall formulate their opinion and make decisions based on available factual data and precise information. Members shall make statements only in possession of the necessary facts, data and information.

1.4. make **impartial** statements and express **neutral** opinion; they shall not be biased in favour of or against any higher education institution or any other organisation or person involved, and shall not discriminate.

1.5. strive for utmost **transparency**, i.e. work pursuant to HAC’s effective by-laws, relevant rules of procedure, professional requirements and detailed guidelines, evaluation principles, as well as HAC’s other internal rules and resolutions. Members shall always be able to **provide the reasons for their opinions**.

1.6. bear **personal responsibility** for their statements and opinions and can **attest to** their compliance with applicable legal regulations, HAC’s internal rules and this Code of Ethics.

1.7. give expert opinion and make statements based on purely **professional considerations**. Membership in HAC endows members with undoubted professional prestige; however, this prestige shall not be based on power and position but on **professional expertise**. Members shall be successful in their discipline or field (or, in the case of members working in a non-scientific area, in their profession), and their expertise shall also include the knowledge of (**higher**

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

education) quality assurance and evaluation issues. Obviously, Members shall also know the cases falling within their competence, as well as accreditation materials related to those cases.

1.8. **be open to new initiatives** (without, of course, being lenient on quality) responding to changes in social, regional and users' needs. If possible, members shall facilitate **sound competition** between institutions and degree programmes.

1.9. adequately assess the often differing points of view of the parties involved (higher education institutions, students, employers etc.) and strives to **harmonise** them as much as possible.

2. **Incompatibility**

The rules of incompatibility regarding members of HAC and its expert committees are laid down in the Government Decree on HAC. Furthermore, civil servants may not be ad hoc committee members, evaluators or external experts. Other rules of incompatibility shall be applicable in adherence to the rules of individual procedures.

3. **Conflict of interests**

Members shall notify HAC of any case in which a **conflict of interests** exists or arises from their existing other commitment(s). Members with a conflict of interests shall refrain from expressing their opinions, and shall in no way participate in any procedures related to the case.

4. **Gains and advantages**

Members shall under no circumstances use their function in HAC to secure personal or institutional **gain of material nature or any other advantage**, and shall reject any such offer.

5. **Confidentiality**

Members shall reveal information about HAC's cases to third parties (non-Members or organisations) only **after the approval of HAC's pertaining official position statement** (a resolution or, in the case of other procedures, a statement by the Presidium or a college). Even then, the information disclosed shall be the public part of the statement.

6. **Intellectual freedom**

Members shall **respect and encourage the freedom of thought and freedom of speech**, and shall not influence the opinion of other Members and those involved in HAC's cases through other than rational arguments.

7. **Intellectual property**

Members shall always respect others' intellectual property. The applications submitted to HAC are, either in full or in part, exclusive **intellectual property** of the applicants (individuals or institutions).

8. **Professional development**

Members shall **continuously improve** their higher education quality assurance and evaluation skills; monitor related domestic and international developments; share their knowledge and experience with other Members and interested colleagues if possible; do their best to **develop** a culture of quality in higher education, and to increase its awareness and **acceptance** in society; support all activities and events that promote these objectives.

9. **Quality of work**

Members shall strive for **excellence** in their work performed on behalf of HAC. They shall pay particular attention to ensure the following: the thoroughness, reliability and unbiased nature of evaluations; the efficiency of committee work; the well-founded nature of statements and their explanations; compliance with the deadlines specified in rules of procedures.

10. **Co-operation**

Members shall respect and consider the opinion of other Members as colleagues, and shall **co-operate** with them in order to achieve common objectives.

11. **Trust**

Trust in HAC's activities is both a proof and an expression of the satisfaction of those affected. For this reason, Members shall do their utmost to develop and maintain such trust. Compliance with and observation of the above values, principles and rules can contribute to the reinforcement of such trust.

II. ETHICS VIOLATIONS

The following acts and attitudes shall be considered as ethics violations:

1. Non-compliance with effective laws and legal regulations applicable to HAC.
(This, of course, also constitutes a violation of law.)
2. Non-compliance with HAC's by-laws, rules of procedure, professional principles and detailed guidelines, evaluation principles and other pertaining internal rules and resolutions.
3. Failure to report to HAC one's own incompatibility or conflict of interests; expressing one's opinion or making a statement in such cases; any participation in procedures related to such cases.
4. Use of one's membership or function in HAC to secure personal or institutional gain of material nature, or any other advantage.
5. Disclosing information about a case to third parties (individuals or organisations) before the publication of HAC's official position statement (a resolution or, in the case of other procedures, a statement by the Presidium or a college), or revealing the non-public part of a statement any time.
6. Violation of intellectual property rights related to the applications submitted to HAC.
7. Failure to co-operate with other Members, or obstruction of co-operation between Members.

III. THE ETHICS COMMITTEE AND ITS PROCEDURES

Rules of procedure

The Ethics and Incompatibility Committee (hereinafter referred to as Committee) is a special committee of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee responsible for investigating cases of ethics violation and incompatibility upon the Plenum's request. The Committee shall submit a draft resolution to the Plenum. The Committee shall work in compliance with the following rules of procedure approved by the Plenum.

1. Committee members

- 1.1. The Committee shall comprise a chairman and two members.
- 1.2. The Committee's chairman shall be a Plenum member representing the discipline of law.

1.3. The Committee's members shall be elected from Plenum members by the Plenum itself, in a secret ballot, based on the recommendation of the president of HAC. Members shall sit on the Committee only for the duration of the investigation of the given ethics or incompatibility case.

1.4. The following persons may not be the Committee's members or chairman: persons against whom the procedure was initiated; persons whose hearing may be necessary during the procedure; persons involved in the case in any other way. In case the chairman has a conflict of interest, the Plenum shall elect another chairman to investigate the issue, upon the recommendation of HAC's president.

2. Ethics procedure

2.1. Should the suspicion of an ethics violation arise, an ethics procedure may be initiated by any Plenum member. The decision on launching the procedure shall be made by the Plenum in a secret ballot.

2.2 The ethics procedure shall be conducted by the Committee. The Committee shall convene as many times as it is necessary to investigate the issue, but at least once. Committee meetings shall be convened by the chairman.

2.3 Having requested and received the opinion of HAC's Presidium, the Committee may, for the period of the investigation, suspend the work of the persons whose possible ethics violations are investigated.

2.4 The Committee may hear any person possessing any information necessary to fully clarify the case.

2.4.1 Persons suspected of ethics violation shall be allowed to verbally express their opinions before the Committee.

2.4.2. Persons suspected of ethics violation shall be notified of the hearing at least eight days before the Committee's meeting. The notification shall include the charge, and the documents underlying the charge shall be attached. If the person suspected of the ethics violation requests exemption from the obligation to appear before the Committee in writing, not later than three days prior to the hearing, the Committee shall set another date for the hearing. The person suspected of the ethics violation shall be warned of the consequences of failing to attend the hearing.

2.4.3 Hearings shall be minuted, and the minutes shall be countersigned by the chairman.

2.5. The Committee's proposal to the Plenum shall be formulated on the basis of the available documents and the hearings. The opinion of all committee members shall be considered upon decision-making with a majority of votes. The member (or chairman) who disagrees with the majority may add his/her opinion to the proposal. The Committee shall provide the reasons for its proposal.

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

2.6. The Committee shall make one of the following draft resolutions to the Plenum:

2.6.1. Establishment of an ethics violation and the related sanction.

2.6.2. Discontinuation of the ethics procedure, if no violation is deemed to have taken place, or if HAC is not competent to decide in the matter.

2.6.3. Discontinuation of the ethics procedure and calling the attention of HAC's president to the necessity of a disciplinary procedure, as stipulated by Act no. XXXIII of 1992 on the Legal Position of Public Employees, if a staff member of HAC's Secretariat is supposed to have committed a disciplinary offence.

2.7. The draft resolution shall be forwarded to the person suspected of the ethics violation. If he/she disagrees, he/she may submit his/her written opinion about the matter to the Committee within three days of the draft resolution's receipt. The opinion shall be filed with the Plenum along with the draft resolution.

3. Sanctions for ethics violations

3.1. Verbal warning

3.2. Written warning

3.3. Recall of the committee member. Committee members may only be recalled upon a grievous or repeated violation of their duties.

4. Resolution

4.1. The Committee's draft resolution shall be submitted to the Plenum by the chairman.

4.2. The Plenum shall discuss the draft resolution and decide about it in a secret ballot. Those involved in the case may not vote and may not be present at the discussion.

4.3. The Plenum shall make one of the following resolutions:

4.3.1. Establishment of an ethics violation, and the related sanction.

4.3.2. Discontinuation of the procedure.

4.3.3. Discontinuation of the procedure and calling the attention of HAC's president to the necessity of a disciplinary procedure.

4.4 The Plenum shall always provide the reasons for its resolution.

4.5. In case the sanction is a verbal or written warning, the Plenum shall ensure the publication of the warning within HAC, or, if necessary, outside HAC.

4.6. The Plenum's resolution shall be communicated by HAC's president to the person suspected of the ethics violation in writing.

Resolutions no. 2000/9/VI/2 and 2000/10/VII/2

Strategic theses and principles

1. It is an effective higher education that can make the biggest possible contribution to the quality of life and secure future of a society. It is important to distinguish between what is expected of higher education internally and externally, as well as between short- and long-term values and interests. The focus should not be on immediate benefits. Although short-term interests should be taken into consideration, they should not serve as the basis of decisions. Higher education needs to convey in-depth, comprehensive and state-of-the-art knowledge. Furthermore, it should develop skills in such a way that they could provide a firm foundation for detailed technical knowledge; skills that enable graduates to apply their specific knowledge to the benefit of society, to keep it up-to-date, to respond to rapidly changing short-term needs (life-long learning, course corrections), and to carry on their profession.
2. The current system of qualification requirements needs to be reviewed and updated. The autonomy of institutions to launch new graduate programmes can be enhanced, but the programmes should not be further fragmented.
3. Accreditation and quality assurance will co-exist in the next eight-year period. The transition from accreditation to the “meta-evaluation” of quality assurance should be gradual. The transitory period, in which the two systems will co-exist, could be closed at the end of the second round of accreditation, i.e. by 2008. Those institutions will be allowed to join the group of meta-evaluators (institutions that need to perform a meta-evaluation only) whose evaluation confirm that they have corrected the defects and deficiencies identified in the first round.
4. Setting up institutional quality assurance systems is the responsibility of autonomous higher education institutions. One of the strategic tasks of institution management is to provide the conditions, bodies, responsibilities and procedures necessary for quality assurance. Nevertheless, the quality assurance system should also be given a sufficient level of autonomy within the institution. In this regard, HAC is responsible for preventing quality assurance from becoming a formality or an end in itself. In the second round of institutional evaluation, HAC needs to assess quality assurance systems as well. In order to do so, it has to work out evaluation criteria and send them to the institutions.

5. The “quality inventory” developed on the basis of HAC’s previous accreditation activities provides an appropriate starting point for institutional quality assurance. HAC’s decisions and future evaluations as well as institutions’ responses should result in a discussion about quality-related issues. This would render the current accreditation system more flexible.
6. Institutional quality assurance systems should promote students’ increased mobility.
7. Institutional quality assurance systems should request and take into consideration graduates’ opinions in a systematic manner, and should share their experiences with HAC (for example by including them in their annual reports).
8. HAC should take a more active role in shaping its own responsibilities, and should not passively accept all tasks that other parties want to impose on it. As the “guardian” of the quality of higher education, it should consider as one of its tasks the regular review of the factors and conditions determining the quality of the Hungarian education system as a whole.
9. Between 2001 and 2004, and in the period of Hungary’s accession to the European Union, amidst the reforms shaping the future of higher education, HAC should pay special attention to maintaining the quality of education and ensure that all quality requirements are met. This period will be characterised by the following:
 - a projected surge in the number of students,
 - a consequential decline in the average quality of students; a trend already apparent;
 - a need for increased attention by teachers and a resulting rise in their workload, due to the spreading of two-year vocational higher education and the fact that the students of such programmes produce lower scores;
 - a need to maintain an acceptable quality of mass education amidst the above developments.

In order to ensure quality, it is especially important to meet the following requirements when carrying out the reforms:

- a 5% annual rise in the number of teachers (about 50% in 10 years),
- increasing the chance that the most talented students choose teaching as their job (higher salaries, more PhD students, improving the quality of education),

- supporting research at universities, which also contributes to maintaining and developing the quality of education; more financial support from the state and from sponsors,
 - increasing the seating capacity of education facilities; infrastructural improvements.
10. While the development of mass education as described in the relevant programme is indispensable, HAC also remains responsible for verifying that the requirements of elite training are met in undergraduate education, though for a lower number of students who are more talented and perform better than the average. State-run institutions should ensure that highly qualified students (about one third or fourth of the total, i.e. significantly more than the number PhD students) find jobs swiftly.
- Only such undergraduate “elite training” of five or six years can ensure that university education remains competitive with foreign institutions, and produces good doctors, engineers and teachers. Such training can release highly qualified professionals who do not necessarily wish to be enrolled in a PhD programme. This objective can be achieved through setting high quality requirements, providing scholarships and specialised complementary training, offering optional subjects etc. Such high-standard training also contributes to the maintenance of the quality of mass education.
11. Besides assessing the quality of newly admitted students (input quality), the future accreditation procedure should place more emphasis on evaluating the quality of the training process and that of its output. Graduates’ chances to find adequate jobs should also be assessed. To this end, the following factors should be examined:
- the quality of students admitted to an institution,
 - the added value provided by the institution,
 - institutions’ capability to innovate; updates to curricula,
 - performance of an institution’s teachers,
 - the knowledge, competence and jobs of graduate students.
12. The “chance for a job” model can be used to evaluate output. The quality of a degree acquired in a certain programme of a certain institution in a given year is indicated by the chance for a job that the degree provides. The model also shows the effect of the activity on the quality of life in society. The “chance for a job” indicator is built up of four – possibly measured – factors:
- the number of job types available to the holder of the given degree,
 - the number of jobs of a given type that the degree-holder has good chances of getting,
 - the life income that can be achieved through the job,

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

- the quality of life provided by the job for the degree-holder.

Besides these aspects, the examination of state-run higher education should also assess how an increase in the number of graduates holding the given degree affects the quality of life in society (language skills, upbringing, self-management, compliance with laws and norms, arts, literature etc.) The “chance for a job” indicator should be calculated in a retrospect manner, for a five-year period.

13. As part of an institution’s accreditation, the division of competencies and responsibilities should also be examined.
14. The users of higher education should be involved in HAC’s accreditation work to a greater extent. One reason is that the year 2000 amendment of the Higher Education act and the subsequent Government Decree on HAC extended HAC’s responsibilities to help establish and launch degree programmes that are needed by the labour market. Users could be involved in the following ways:
 - Setting up a group of advisers representing users.
 - Inviting more users to HAC’s expert committees and to visiting committees (in accordance with the given area’s specific features).
 - In some fields, working out case studies based on users’ experience (e.g. by collecting employers’ views).
 - Inviting users’ representatives to discussions about certain agenda items of HAC meetings.
15. When formulating accreditation requirements, more emphasis should be laid on the differences between college and university levels. Separate set of requirements should be prepared for the different education levels, based on the nature and specifics of the programmes.
16. HAC’s previous experience show that the introduction of BA and MA degrees, along with full transferability, would cost very much, especially if it is to take place simultaneously with the planned headcount rise. Such a move would mean the reorganisation of the entire system of college education. Also, it would place more emphasis on theoretical training, or else it would result in a further decline in the quality of mass university education. College education in Central and Eastern Europe was established on the basis of the German model where guilds were dissolved in the 19th century. As such, it has been highly practical and focused on professions, producing “full-fledged professionals”. Universities, by contrast, lay the theoretical foundations of professional development, preparing students to become professionals who can further develop their own skills on their own.

17. For this reason, college and university postgraduate education methods in individual fields should be further developed (in addition to the introduction of two-year vocational higher education). HAC considers such education feasible in the form of two- or three-year complementary postgraduate training (three years in the case of a transfer from a college to a university program). Postgraduate education can also be organised in colleges; in the field of architecture, for example, postgraduate courses granting a designer's or a master builder's degree can offer a higher level of competence.
18. Upon the evaluation of off-site training, special attention should be paid to the methods of transferring knowledge and verifying its attainment. In the case of distance learning, the quality of the training package used is a key evaluation factor.
19. HAC's own operation, effectiveness and efficiency can be evaluated through the following steps:
 - HAC should review its own activities, including its objectives and their achievement, on an annual basis.
 - HAC should perform a detailed self-evaluation once in three years, and should forward the results to those affected by its activities to invite their comments.
 - HAC should enable higher education institutions to provide regular feedback on accreditation.
 - HAC should monitor international developments in the field of accreditation, and should regularly compare the Hungarian practice to that of other countries' accreditation and quality assurance organisations.
20. When reviewing its own operation and launching new accreditation procedures, HAC should strive for simplification and for reducing paperwork that accreditation generates for the institutions involved and to HAC's Secretariat.
21. In order to improve its own image and increase the public's awareness of its activities, HAC should make concrete steps to become more open. It should:
 - invite the representatives of higher education conferences to the Plenum meetings;
 - encourage informal discussions involving its stakeholders; to this end, HAC officials should regularly visit higher education institutions;
 - make sure that the annual information booklet for university/college applicants also includes the programmes' accreditation data, and non-accredited programmes are not included in it;
 - HAC's homepage should be modernised and kept up-to-date.

Abbreviations and codes of universities and colleges

Universities

Code	Name of institution	Code	Faculties
BK ÁE	<i>Budapest University of Economics and Public Administration</i>	ÁFK	College of Public Administration
		GTK	Business Administration
		KTK	Economics
		TDK	Social Sciences
BME	<i>Budapest University of Technical and Economic Sciences</i>	ÉSZK	Architectural Engineering
		ÉÖK	Civil Engineering
		GTK	Economics and Social Sciences
		GÉK	Mechanical Engineering
		KSK	Traffic Engineering
		TTK	Natural Sciences
		VEK	Chemical Engineering
		VIK	Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
DE	<i>University of Debrecen</i>	ÁOK	General Medicine
		BTK	Humanities
		EFK	College of Healthcare
		HW PFK	Hajdúböszörmény College for Kindergarten Teachers' Training
		KTK	Economics
		MTK	Agriculture
		MFK	College of Technology
		TTK	Natural Sciences

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Code	Name of Institution	Code	Faculty
ELTE	<i>Loránd Eötvös University of Arts and Sciences</i>	ÁJK	Law
		GYFK	Gusztáv Bárczi Training College for Teachers of Disabled Children
		BTK	Humanities
		TFK	College for Secondary-School Teachers' Training
		TOFK	College for Training of Kindergarten and Primary-School Teachers
		TTK	Natural Sciences
KE	<i>University of Kaposvár</i>	ÁTK	Zoology
		CSPFK	V.M. Csokonai College for Primary-School Teachers' Training
LFZE	<i>Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music</i>		
MIE	<i>Hungarian Academy of Design</i>		
MKE	<i>Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts</i>		
ME	<i>University of Miskolc</i>	AKK	Materials and Metallurgical Engineering
		ÁJK	Law
		BTK	Humanities
		CTFK	Comenius College for General-School Teachers' Training
		GTK	Economics
		GÉK	Mechanical Engineering
		MFK	Technical Earth Science

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Code	Name of Institution	Code	Faculty
NYE	<i>University of Western Hungary</i>	BPFK	Elek Benedek College for Kindergarten Teachers' Training
		EMK	Forestry Engineering
		FMK	Timber Industry Engineering
		FFFK	Geodesy and Land Management College
		MTK	Agriculture
PTE	<i>Pécs University of Arts and Sciences</i>	ÁJK	Law
		ÁOK	General Medicine
		BTK	Humanities
		EFK	College of Healthcare
		IFK	Gyula Illyés College
		KTK	Economics
		MK	Arts
		PMMFK	Mihály Pollack College of Technology
		TTK	Natural Sciences
SE	<i>Semmelweis University</i>	ÁOK	General Medicine
		ETK	Health Sciences
		EFK	College of Healthcare
		FOK	Dentistry
		GYTK	Pharmaceutics
		TSK	Physical Education and Sport Science
SZTE	<i>Szeged University of Arts and Sciences</i>	ÁJK	Law
		ÁOK	General Medicine
		BTK	Humanities
		EFK	College of Healthcare
		GTK	Economics

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

<i>Code</i>	Name of Institution	Code	Faculty
SZTE		GYTK	Pharmaceutics
		JTFK	Gyula Juhász College for Secondary-School Teachers' Training,
		MFK	College of Agriculture
		SZÉFK	Szeged College of Food Industry
		TTK	Natural Sciences
SZIE	<i>St. Stephen University</i>	ÁTK	Veterinary Medicine
		ÉTK	Food Science
		GTK	Economics and Social Sciences
		GÉK	Mechanical Engineering
		JFK	College of Jászberény
		KTK	Horticulture
		GMFK	College of Agriculture and Economics
		MKK	Agriculture and Environmental Science
		TK	Landscape Engineering, Protection and Development
		YMMF K	Miklós Ybl College of Technology
SZFE	<i>Academy of Theatre and Motion Picture Arts</i>		
VE	<i>University of Veszprém</i>	GMK	Georgikon Agriculture
		MK	Engineering
		TK	Teacher Training

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Code	Name of Institution	Code	Faculty
ZM NE	<i>Miklós Zrínyi University for National Defence</i>	BKMF K	János Bolyai Military College of Technology
		HTK	Military Science
		VSZT K	Management and Organisation

Colleges

Code	Name of college	Code	Faculty
BDF	<i>Dániel Berzsenyi College</i>		
BGF	<i>Budapest College of Economics</i>	KVIFK	Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism
		KKFK	Foreign Trade
		PSZFK	Finance and Accountancy
BMF	<i>Technical College of Budapest</i>	BDMF K	Donát Bánki Technology
		KGFK	Károly Keleti Economics
		KKVF K	Kálmán Kandó Electrical Engineering
		NIFK	János Neumann Information Technology
		RKMF K	Sándor Rejtő Light Industry Engineering
DF	<i>College of Dunaujváros</i>		
EJF	<i>József Eötvös College</i>		
EKF	<i>Károly Eszterházy College</i>		
KF	<i>College of Kecskemét</i>	KFK	Horticulture
		MFK	Technology
		TFK	General-School Teachers' Training College
MTF	<i>Hungarian Dance College</i>		

Code	Name of college	Code	Faculty
NYF	<i>College of Nyíregyháza</i>	BMFK	Humanities and Arts
		GTFK	Economics and Social Sciences
		MMFK	Technology and Agriculture
		TTFK	Natural Sciences
RTF	<i>Police College</i>		
SZIF	<i>István Széchenyi College</i>		
SZF	<i>College of Szolnok</i>		
TSF	<i>Sámuel Tessedik College</i>	KFK	Kőrös College Faculty
		MFK	Agriculture
		MVK	Agriculture, Water and Environmental Management

Church Institutions

Code	Institution	Code	Faculty
DRHE	<i>Debrecen Reformed Theological University</i>		
EHE	<i>Budapest Lutheran Theological Academy</i>		
KRE	<i>Gáspár Károli Calvinist Academy</i>	BTK	Humanities
		HTK	Theology
		TFK	General-School Teachers' Training College
ORKI-ZSE	<i>Rabbinical Seminary Jewish Univ. of Theology</i>		
PPKE	<i>Péter Pázmány Catholic University</i>	BTK	Humanities
		HTK	Theology
		JÁK	Law
ATF	<i>Theological Seminary of the Seventh Day Adventist Church</i>		

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Code	Name of college	Code	Faculty
AVKF	<i>Vilmos Apor Theological College</i>		
TKBF	<i>Gate of Dharma Buddhist College</i>		
BTA	<i>Baptist Theological Academy</i>		
EGHF	<i>Eger Theological College</i>		
ESZHF	<i>Esztergom Theological College</i>		
GYHF	<i>Győr Theological College</i>		
KTIF	<i>Ferenc Kölcsey Reformed College for General-School Teachers' Training, Debrecen</i>		
PRTA	<i>Pápa Reformed Theological College</i>		
PHF	<i>Pécs Theological College</i>		
PTF	<i>Pentecostal Theological College</i>		
SRTA	<i>Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy</i>		
SSZHF	<i>Sapientia Seminary and Theological College</i>	FHFK	<i>Franciscan Theological College</i>
		PSZGF K	<i>St. Gerard Theological College</i>
		PHTFK	<i>Piarist of Theology and Secondary-School Teachers' Training College</i>
SSTF	<i>Sola Scriptura Seminary and Theological College</i>		
SZHF	<i>Szeged Theological College</i>		
SZAG KHF	<i>St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College</i>		

ACCREDITATION IN HUNGARY 9

Code	Name of college	Code	Faculty
SZBHF	<i>St. Bernard Theological College</i>		
VHF	<i>Veszprém Theological College</i>		
VTIF	<i>János Vitéz Roman Catholic College for General-School Teachers' Training</i>		
WJLF	<i>John Wesley Pastor Training College</i>		

Foundation and Private Institutions

Code	Institution
AGYE	Gyula Andrassy German University
ÁVF	General Business College
BKF	Budapest College of Communication
DFGF	Ferenc Deák College of Economics
GDF	Dénes Gábor College
KJF	János Kodolányi College
MÜTF	Modern Business College
MPANNI	András Pető Institute for Teaching and Teacher Training for Motion Disabled
NÜF	International Business School