

eigenkritische Elemente enthalten. Fehlen diese, erweckt dies den Eindruck, als stufe die Hochschule das Akkreditierungsverfahren als eine Art Unternehmensberatung ein.

Was wünschen sich die Expertinnen und Experten von der Hochschule? Und was wünscht sich die Hochschule?

JL: Expertinnen und Experten wünschen sich Offenheit und Transparenz. Die Hochschule will eine objektive und faktenorientierte Beurteilung, die konkrete Hinweise zur Weiterentwicklung der Institution enthalten soll.

HH: Experten wünschen sich nicht zu intensiv vorbereitete Gesprächspartner. Einstudierte Melodien werden im günstigeren Fall nicht ernst genommen, im

ungünstigeren wirken sie sich nachteilig aus. Zudem muss die Hochschule überzeugende Anhaltspunkte liefern für ihre eigenkritische Entwicklungsfähigkeit und -bereitschaft. Das ist der Gütegarant. Das Anliegen der Hochschule ist es, dass ihre Konzepte und ihre Arbeit im Zentrum stehen und nicht ein Abgleich mit den Konzepten der Experten erfolgt.

Successful accreditation – what experts and universities think

INTERVIEW WITH:



OSSI V. LINDQVIST
Professor Emeritus,
University of Eastern
Finland



**PROF. SARA STEINERT
BORELLA**
Dean, Franklin College
Switzerland

How can an expert contribute to the success of a process?

Ossi V. Lindqvist (OVL): The experts need to always be well and thoroughly prepared. This not only includes technical issues, but also knowledge of the broader higher education environment of the accredited institution. Coming from different backgrounds, all of them, including students, contribute to the process by bringing in new aspects and vistas. The Chair of the team should also take the responsibility of making sure all experts in a team work professionally and coherently towards the same overall goals.

Sara Steinert Borella (SSB): The expert needs to understand the context and be aware of all the stakeholders of the institution in order to make the process successful and smooth.

What characterises a good cooperation between the experts and the representatives of the university to

be accredited (management, quality management)?

OVL: One important aspect is that both parties fully understand the 'name of the game': the process is open and cordial, but also tough if and when required. In addition, the university needs to be honest and to represent many different opinions. The experts should be able to recognise the very core issues involved in the accreditation process. The site visit is to help to ascertain if the quality management as it appears on paper is met in reality.

SSB: A good relationship depends on mutual trust, but the nature of the evaluation process and the potential clash of interests may compromise this. It is essential for the university to pay close attention to what is required. In return, the critical feedback provided by the expert should be part of a developmental process that then can help the university achieve its goals. Ideally, this feedback should help the university move forward in both research and assessment.

What factors characterise a constructive accreditation process?

OVL: The main factor is that the accreditation process provides a good and appropriate learning experience for both parties, regardless of the final accreditation result. Universities receive a view from the outside and the experts learn more and more about universities in different contexts. Both parties need to work towards guaranteeing students' access to quality education.

SSB: Open and regular communication between the accrediting agency and the institution, combined with the clear articulation of expectations and potential outcomes as well as a process which recognises achievements and areas that need improvement.

What expectations do the experts have towards the university and vice versa?

OVL: The experts expect that the messages and reporting coming from the university are clear, unambiguous and wide enough to answer the questions and the set criteria in their fullest context. Experts also need to visit the university and have enough time for the evaluation. As each university is different, universities expect fair treatment, taking into account their context, peculiarities and qualities.

SSB: The university expects the expert to have the required experience in both research and administration to understand the university's particular context and mission. An expert provides a necessary look from the outside, one that should not only be evaluative but developmental whenever possible.