

# AGREEMENT BETWEEN

Schweizerische Agentur für Akkreditierung und  
Qualitätssicherung

**AAQ**

[info@aaq.ch](mailto:info@aaq.ch)

(The Swiss Accreditation Agency)

Effingerstrasse 15, 3001 Bern, Switzerland

represented by the Director, Dr. Christoph Grolimund

Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione  
della Qualità delle Università e Facoltà Ecclesiastiche

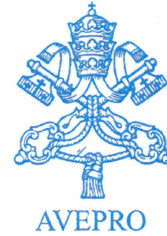
**AVEPRO**

(The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion  
of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties)

Via della Conciliazione 5, 00198 Roma, Italy,

[avepro@avepro.va](mailto:avepro@avepro.va)

represented by the President, Rev. Dr. Andrzej S. Wodka, C.SS.R.



The parties of the agreement, AAQ and AVEPRQ, both endowed with full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and operating in the common European Higher Education Area (EHEA),

desiring to enhance mutual trust, to strengthen mutual links, to promote friendly relations, and to contribute to internationalization of Higher Education,

and recognizing the importance of the European Standards of Quality Assurance in higher education and the benefits to be derived by the Agencies from close cooperation,

## AGREE

- to improve collaboration in the fields of Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement and Quality Culture, relying on the exchange of best practice;
- to recognize their mutual standards, norms and specificity,
- to cooperate in Switzerland in order to bundle evaluations of theological faculties according to the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* with institutional accreditation according to the *Swiss Higher Education Act* (SR 414.20).

Activities under this Agreement may commence as of the date of signature and continue for a period of five years unless ended by any of the Agency by written notice within a three-month period prior to such conclusion.

The bundled procedure is outlined in the Annex to this Agreement and will serve as the blueprint for the individual procedure.

Dr. Christoph Grolimund  
Director AAQ

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Place

19.10.2020

Date of signature

Rev. Dr. Andrzej S. Wodka, C.S.S.R.  
President of AVEPRO

Rome

Place

September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Date of signature

## Evaluation according to *Veritatis Gaudium* in the framework of an institutional accreditation based on HEdA

29.09.2020

### 1. Starting Point

- 1.1. The Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* of 8.12.2017 makes the evaluation of an ecclesiastical faculty (e.g. of Theology, Philosophy or Canon Law) according to the criteria of the Vatican agency AVEPRO obligatory worldwide.
- 1.2. *Veritatis Gaudium* does not define deadlines for mandatory evaluation.
- 1.3. The *Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector* (HEdA) makes institutional accreditation compulsory in Switzerland for higher education institutions wishing to use one of the protected designations under Article 29 HEdA ("University", "University Institute", "University of Applied Sciences", "University of Applied Sciences Institute", "University of Teacher Education" and derivatives).
- 1.4. AVEPRO and AAQ have noted that they both share the institutional approach. They have therefore explored the possibility of carrying out the evaluation of the theological faculties or similar ecclesiastical institutions in Switzerland within the Swiss framework of institutional accreditation.

### 2. Mapping of Standards

- 2.1. In the course of mapping the quality standards according to the HEdA with the standards of AVEPRO, the two agencies also established that the quality standards according to the HEdA largely cover the criteria of AVEPRO.
- 2.2. Not covered by the HEdA standards are:
  - 2.2.1. Standard 4: General overview regarding programmes: education, multidisciplinary; interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches;
  - 2.2.2. Standard 5: Strategies and modes of learning and the centrality of students;
  - 2.2.3. Standard 6: Support and services for students;
  - 2.2.4. Standard 7: Learning and teaching: definition of study plans, their monitoring and review, appreciation of teaching staff.

### 3. Procedure

- 3.1. AVEPRO and AAQ found a high level of convergence regarding the requirements of both the evaluation according to *Veritatis Gaudium* and the institutional accreditation according to HEdA.
- 3.2. Both agencies work with self-evaluation report and external evaluation report.
- 3.3. Differences can be found in the guidelines for self-assessment. AVEPRO prescribes a SWOT analysis and standardised statistics for self-assessment.
- 3.4. Both agencies set up their expert groups using a pool of experts.
  - 3.4.1. Expert panels of AVEPRO are compiled from AVEPRO's database and approved by AVEPRO's President;

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- 3.4.2. The AAQ compiles a “longlist” from all available sources in relation to the profile of the university and presents it for approval to the AAQ Commission within the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC). After approval AAQ puts together an expert panel from the list independently.
- 3.5. Within 6 months after the evaluation, a university, faculty or institution evaluated by AVEPRO draws up a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP); 12 months after the evaluation, it draws up a Strategic Plan.
- 3.6. At the latest 2 years after accreditation, SAC checks – if conditions have been imposed – whether these have been fulfilled; this concludes the procedure.

#### 4. Pilot procedure

- 4.1. Against this background, AVEPRO and AAQ consider the evaluation of an ecclesiastical faculty or institution in Switzerland within the framework of Swiss institutional accreditation to be possible. A pilot project should provide information about the feasibility.

#### 5. Basic Parameters

- 5.1. The evaluation of a Swiss ecclesiastical faculty or institution is to be added to the process of institutional accreditation, i.e. the elements from AVEPRO's evaluation procedure not covered by the institutional accreditation (AVEPRO's standards 4, 5, 6, 7, SWOT Analysis and the requested statistics) are to be evaluated in parallel of the institutional accreditation. Respecting the autonomy of the two agencies, the outcome of this evaluation will not have a direct impact on the institutional accreditation, nor on the rights and competences of the Congregation for Catholic Education.
  - 5.1.1. AAQ will base its proposal for accreditation on the documents relating to the institutional accreditation according to HEdA only, the same applies to the decision by the Accreditation.
  - 5.1.2. AVEPRO will receive both the documentation relating to the institutional accreditation and the added elements for the conclusion of the evaluation.
- 5.2. Self-evaluation: the ecclesiastical faculty or institution writes a self-evaluation report based on AVEPRO's standards 4, 5, 6, 7, SWOT Analysis and the requested statistics independent of the self-evaluation report in the context of the HEdA institutional accreditation. In evaluating the Faculty or in drafting the SER, additional information could be obtained from the material delivered for the institutional accreditation (see point 5.5).
- 5.3. Group of experts: one expert, approved by AVEPRO, joins the expert group. This expert is responsible for the analysis of AVEPRO's standards 4, 5, 6, 7 SWOT Analysis and the requested statistics.
- 5.4. Site-visits: The expert selected by AVEPRO participates in all interviews. AAQ will add an interview section dedicated to AVEPRO's needs. This interview section is the sole responsibility of the AVEPRO expert, the other members of the expert group are however invited to participate.
- 5.5. Report of the experts: The AVEPRO expert will write the report evaluating the above-mentioned elements/questions. The expert will be able to create the link to the report of the experts of the institutional accreditation as the expert participated in all the discussion.



AVEPRO

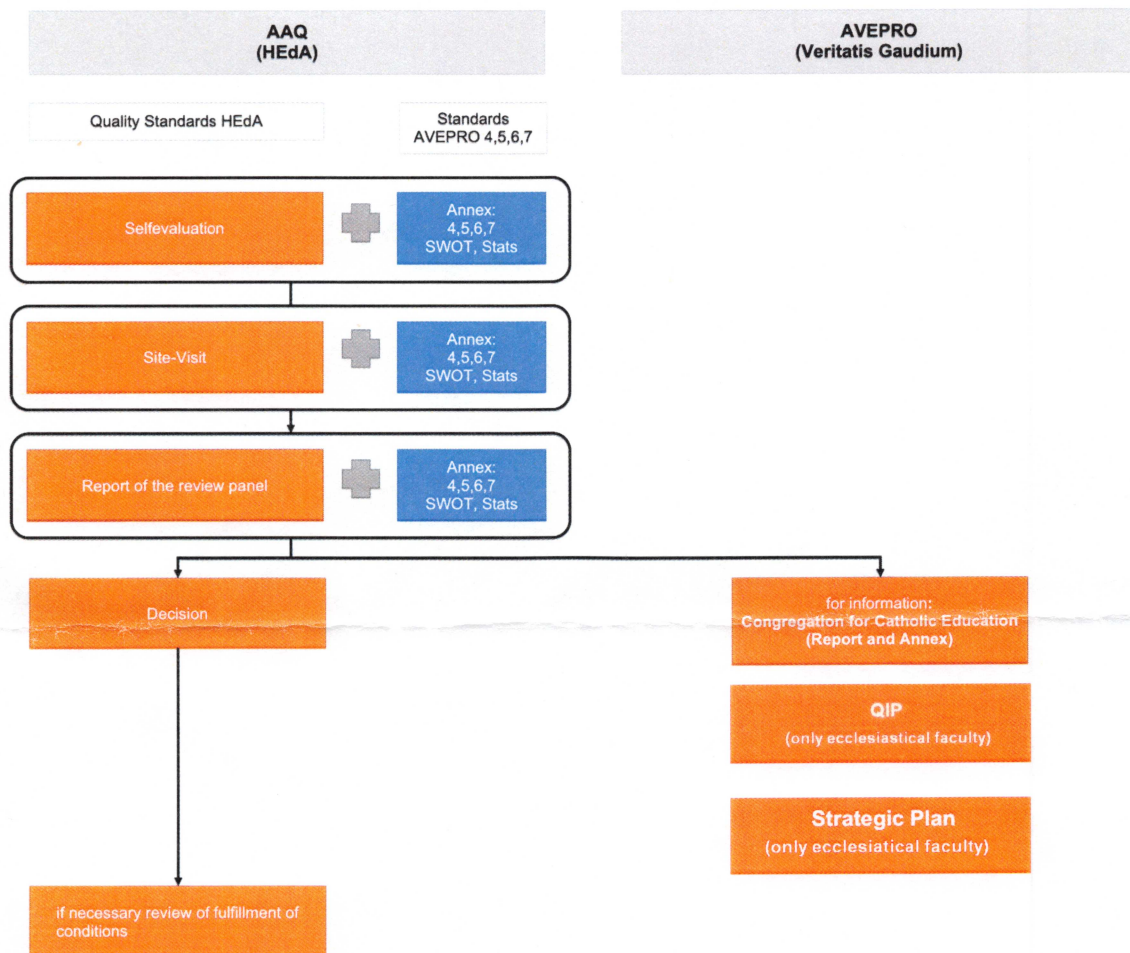
5.6. AAQ concludes contracts with all experts and remunerates all of them in accordance with the Fee Regulations of the SAC. The extra costs for the AVEPRO expert are covered by the ecclesiastical faculty or institution.

6. **Annexes**

Chart of procedure

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## Chart of procedure



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