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System accreditation and its potential for integrated, evidence-based and effective quality assurance and development of study programs

Abstract

"System accreditation" is a new way for German universities to conduct the mandatory accreditation of all their study programs. A correspondent pilot project at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGUM) plays an important role in paving the way for this alternative to the prevailing program accreditation. This paper aims to explore the potential of system accreditation for the establishment of an integrated, evidence-based and effective quality assurance and development system for study programs. After a short introduction into the accreditation system in Germany, the working conditions and the quality management approach at JGUM are described. The final section of the paper focuses on the conduct of system accreditation and discusses its potential in the light of typical challenges and problems for quality assurance and development in higher education.