Resolve regarding the accreditation of the studies program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts"

(M.A.)

at the Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin / University of Applied Sciences

On the basis of the assessment report of the evaluation group and of the advice of the Accreditation Commission in their 72. Meeting held on 20./21.08.2018, the Accreditation Commission issues the following decision:

1. Under consideration of the "Rules of the Accreditation Commission for the accreditation of study programs and for system accreditation" (resolve of the Accreditation Commission dated 20.02.2013), the studies program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts" conferring the title of "Master of Arts" at the Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin / University of Applied Sciences is granted the accreditation provided that a precondition is met.

In principle, the program complies with the criteria of the Accreditation Commission for the accreditation of study programs, with the Common Structural Requirements of the Conference of Ministers of Education, the specific structure requirements for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs at the level of the relevant federal state, as well as with the requirements of the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees in their respectively currently valid versions. The deficiencies found in the procedure can be remedied by the university within nine months.

- 2. The program is an advanced master program.
- 3. The accreditation is tied to the requirement indicated below. The condition is to be implemented. The implementation of the condition must be documented in writing and submitted to AQAS not later than 31.05.2019.
- 4. The accreditation is granted for a **period of seven years** (taking into account the full last academic year concerned), which, added to the provisional accreditation according to the decision of the Accreditation Commission from 28/29 August 2017, makes it **valid until 30/09/2024**.

Precondition:

1. The modularisation concept of the study program is to be adapted to the requirements of the Specific Structural Requirements of the KMK, which are common to the federal states: The study program is to be divided into modules, which are usually to be completed within a maximum of two consecutive semesters and can be completed with a module examination. This adaptation can take after the previously foreseen "Units", whereby their total number does not have to be as high as it was until now, so that syntheses with correspondingly more ECTS are possible.

2 The corresponding module descriptions must be submitted. The previous designation of study parts A-D with "Modules" has to be replaced by another one.

Requirement 1 is issued insofar, based on the report, the Accreditation Commission departs from the assumption that criterion 2.2. is only met partially.

This requirement refers to deficiencies identified during the evaluation procedure regarding the fulfillment of the criteria of the Accreditation Commission for the accreditation of study programs in its version from 20.02.2013.

For further justification of this decision, the Accreditation Commission refers to the assessment report attached.

Assessment Report regarding the accreditation of the study program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts" (M.A.)

at the Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin /University of Applied Sciences

On-site visit on 17.04.2018

Evaluation group:

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Nieke University of Rostock, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute for General Pedagogy and Social Pedagogy

Prof. Dr. Stephan Schlickau University of Hildesheim, Department 3: Linguistics and Information Science. Institute for Intercultural Communication

Dr. Ulrich Hößler Freelance trainer and consultant for intercultural competence, Regensburg (representative of the professional practice)

Ohle Zyber Student at the University of Potsdam (student evaluator)

Coordination:

Dr. Verena Kloeters, Office of AQAS e.V., Cologne

Preamble

The object of accreditation procedures are Bachelor- and Master study programs at state or state-recognized universities. The accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs is compulsory according to the Common Structural Requirements of the Conference of Ministers of Education and is introduced in different ways into the individual higher education laws of the federal states as a prerequisite for state approval.

The assessment procedure of the study programs was conducted according to the "Rules of the Accreditation Commission for the accreditation of study programs and for system accreditation", in their version from 20.02.2013.

I. Procedure for the assessment

The Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin requests the accreditation of the advanced studies program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts" conferring the title "Master of Arts".

The submitted application is a request for re-accreditation.

The accreditation process was opened on 28./29. August 2017 by the pertinent Accreditation Commission of AQAS. A provisional accreditation was granted valid until 31.08.2018. The on-site visit took place on 17.04.2018 at the university location in Berlin by the evaluation group mentioned above. It included separate conversations with the university management, the teachers and the students, among other things.

The present report of the evaluation group is based on the written application documents submitted by the university and the results of the on-site visit. In particular, the descriptive parts of the report relate to the application.

II. Evaluation of the program

1. General informations

The Alice Salomon Hochschule (ASH) Berlin is a state university of applied sciences of the federal state of Berlin with focus on the areas social work, health, and child-raising and infant education. By the university's own statement, it is grounded in the tradition of the 'Social Women's School' and of the German Academy for Social and Educational Women's Work, which has a tradition of more than 100 years. In the spirit of Alice Salomon, the founder of social work in Germany, the university pursues central principles such as interdisciplinarity, a close connection between theory, research and practice and an international orientation. The university pursues the goal of contributing to the professionalization and academization of occupations traditionally performed by women in the fields of social work, health, education, as well as contributing to disciplinary development through their research orientation.

The Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin sees itself as being on the way towards an open university and has set itself the goal of promoting fairness, acceptance and appreciation of personal diversity. In addition, it claims to be committed to equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming, anti-discrimination work, and the promotion of diversity. In particular, it promotes the participation of women in leadership positions in teaching and research.

Assessment:

The program fits very well into the described general concept of the University for gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities for students by opening up an international perspective on culturally embedded and articulated conflicts, which are addressed through theoretically founded and practically tested forms of conflict management.

The hitherto composition of student batches by gender and socio-cultural backgrounds is cosmopolitan, sensitive to discrimination and contemplates individual cases by appropriately

justified selection decisions at the admission, yielding a compensatory effect against possible structural discrimination. This goes far beyond the usual processes for achieving gender justice.

1. Profile and goals of the program

The advanced program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts" aims at four main goals in order to professionalize students in the management of intercultural and transnational conflicts: professionalization, transdisciplinary, transnationality, and Living Laboratory (livlab). Different approaches to and understandings of conflicts and their transformations are to be presented. On this basis, students are expected to develop methodically oriented yet participatory social action that is adequate for coping with conflicts. Graduates should be able to translate the reciprocity between analysis and conflict management into practical research.

The program aims at developing an international profile. It is linked with the master's program "Acción Social en Contextos Globales "at the "Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca" in Mexico, in terms of content, concept and structure. This gives students the opportunity to spend one or more semesters at the partner university.

The program comprises a total of 120 credit points and a standard study period of four semesters. Admission requirements are a first professional qualification of at least 180 credit points and proof of at least one year of relevant professional activity. In addition, applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation from the areas of higher education and professional practice, explain their motivation to study and demonstrate good English or Spanish language proficiency. An admission commission decides on the admission based on the submitted documents.

Assessment:

The objective of the program, which is not sufficiently evident from its description, was clarified during the on-site visit. The conception of the program relates both to the micro-level (conflicts in everyday life) and to conflicts at the institutional level. The training addresses both levels. The study program has grown historically; questions of the evaluation group in this regard were also clarified in the course of the on-site visit. In view of a persistent demand that goes far beyond the study place capacity, it can be assumed that the study program generates sufficient interest. The conversations with students confirmed that their expectations in terms of contents and original didactic methodology are fully met. The autoethnographic reflection method allows both a general personality development and a socio-pedagogical professionalism based on an empirical and theoretical grounds coming from different disciplines and paradigmatically different approaches to the world.

The on-site visit showed that the program works better in practice than can be deduced from the factual report. Problems that have arisen in the past have apparently been successfully addressed and productively solved.

Overall, it can be said that this is an original, well-functioning study program. It fits well into the educational objectives of the university as an internationally oriented advanced studies course and shows a convincing combination of professional goals (social work as a set of activating solution proposals for social problems derived from inequality and discrimination; intercultural conflict resolution) and transdisciplinary aspects (international and intercultural exchange, sensitization for structural discrimination in all societies).

The coupling of practical elements and theoretical reflection backgrounds and methods is realized through original formats of scientific didactics. The admission requirements are comprehensible and transparent and appropriate for the program. They are publicly accessible on the homepage of the master program. The requirement of at least one year of qualified professional activity as a prerequisite for admission to an advanced Master's program is fulfilled. The selection procedure proposed seems appropriate.

2. Quality of the Curriculum

In the course of the re-accreditation process, the program was fundamentally restructured, and its standard study period extended from three to four semesters. In addition, a cooperation agreement has been signed with the Institute of Sociological Research and the Department of Education of the Autonomous University of Oaxaca Benito Juárez.

As part of this cooperation agreement, a sister study program was set up in Mexico to expand the opportunities for student mobility between Berlin and Oaxaca. In addition, the contents of the modules were fundamentally restructured. In total, there are four modules (A-D) to be completed, all of which take place from semesters 1-3 and are aimed at allowing social conflicts to be viewed from different, yet related perspectives:

- In Module A "Social World and Power Relations", which comprises five courses, students study the theoretical framework for action in conflict contexts.
- Module B "Research, Action, and Networking" serves the purpose of setting the methodological focus. Here students learn interactively form the experiences acquired from practice.
- Module C "Specialization Seminars and Workshops" covers core topics of intercultural conflict management. Here, topics relevant to conflicts (understood in the broad sense) are taught and discursively discussed in seminaries and workshops.
- Module D "Thesis and Colloquia" covers the master thesis to be elaborated during the fourth semester. The methodological and theoretical foundation of the master thesis should take into account the central elements of modules A, B, and C.

All modules are specific to the program. With the exception of the optional workshops ("Optional Workshops") and seminars ("Optional Seminars"), which take place during the second and third semester within Module C, all courses are compulsory.

Assessment:

The curriculum is practice-oriented; the approach of the program is consistently pursued, whereby both disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge are conveyed, as well as technical, methodical and general or key competences. A valuable resource to this purpose is, among other things, the composition of the student batches, which have long been characterized by a high degree of diversity. The evaluation group was convinced through the testimony of both teachers and students during the on-site visit that there is an original, good, and competence-building conception here (which was less clear from the formal and abstract description of documentation). The curriculum thus meets the requirements defined in the "Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees" for the qualification level "Master".

In the future, the university could explore the possibilities of further systematizing the way in which the resources drawn from the diversity of its students are scientifically harnessed. This would probably also result in further methodological strengthening. It has already been shown from past experience that the program can be developed further successfully. The above-mentioned extension of the study period to four semesters with simultaneous restructuring of the modules (see below) since the last accreditation can be mentioned as an example of a measure that promotes quality within a rule-compliant framework of study-time. Sufficiently varied and adequate forms of learning and examination are included, so that students get to know an appropriate range of examination forms during their studies.

During the process, the evaluation group raised the question of whether the university adequately considers its duty of care, both with regard to the students and the relevant stakeholders, when it obligingly sends the students into real conflict fields in the framework of the project. The university should think about how to comply with this duty of care.

The changes to the curriculum are transparent and comprehensible. As per self-description, the curriculum is now divided into three relatively large "modules" (as well as a closure module), which are explained, for example, in the program's website. The "modules" in turn comprise several "units", each of which has a scope of 5-6 credits. As utilized here, the concept of "module" is not in line with the definition of the KMK. It became clear during the on-site visit that the term "module" refers rather to study areas, and the "units" rather correspond to the module level.

The university should bring the terminology into accordance with KMK guidelines. This change is purely formal and does not require any change in the study concept. Once this change has been performed, the examination concept would also be consistent with the requirement of "one exam per module". (Monitum 1)

An explicit mobility window is not provided. According to the university, mobility is currently only possible with the sister program in Mexico.

3. Framework conditions for studying

A Program Director has been named for the study program. The program contents should be revised within the individual modules through module conferences and adjusted if necessary. In addition, lecturers' conferences are planned at the beginning and end of each semester.

Information about the program is primarily accessible online, as most of the prospective students come from abroad. In addition, various publications are provided for information, which are also made available to partner organizations.

Consultations are channeled via e-mail, Skype and other social media. According to the university, students receive advice and support through the Coordination Office, for example when applying for a visa. Information, counseling and support services are to be provided also at the beginning of the program in order to prepare the students newly arrived in Berlin not only for their studies, but also to provide them with individual support in important administrative processes. These include an introduction to the university infrastructure (e.g. library and computer center) and information on ASH's cross-curricular offerings (such as International Office, career planning). The above is supplemented by a workshop to raise awareness of group-dynamic processes in heterogeneous groups, as well as an exercise in academic writing.

In terms of teaching methods, seminar, field learning, and self-study are the predominant modalities. However, the university points out that the aim is shifting increasingly to problem-based learning.

An evaluation usually foreseen for each module. Types of examination include a homework assignment, the development of an action project, a written work, and the writing of a presentation. In addition to this comes the master's thesis.

The university has submitted student statistics that documents information on actual study periods, retention rates, number of graduates, and average final grades, among other information.

Assessment:

The basic concept of high heterogeneity of the student body is received positively by the students, meaningfully integrated into teaching, and fosters the exchange of experiences. The university provides a good overview of perspectives and opportunities after graduation and during the practical phases. The evaluation group has gained the impression that the program meets the initial expectations of the students.

With the designation of a program director, the responsibilities for the program have been clearly defined. The regular lecturers' conferences ensure that the curricula of each individual module are coordinated in terms of content and organization. The students view the modularization as meaningful. The individual modules build noticeably on each other. However, from the point of view of the interviewed students, the choice of study priorities is problematic. To be noted in this regard, is that with a range of between 30 and minimum of 5 participants, the implementation of all possible workshops seems unrealistic. The heads of each course credibly argued to the evaluation group that everything possible is being done to offer as many advanced courses as possible.

The university offers comprehensive information and orientation regarding the needs of the target group for prospective students. This includes both interdisciplinary and subject-specific services, as well as the general counseling services offered by the university for students in special life situations. In addition, the students are also catered for in preparation for and during the practice phases; whereby student support is embedded in the remaining contents throughout the program. The students interviewed during the on-site visit made it clear that the support they receive is very good, and that there is close and trusting contact with the teachers. The student workload was checked for plausibility. The extension of the study program to four semesters is meaningful and rule-compliant, and is rated very positively by the evaluation group. After the visit, the university submitted an overview showing the uniform workload distribution (30 CP per semester). The practical elements are projects embedded in the course of studies, which are not individually credited, but are meaningfully linked to the rest of the material.

Exam density and organization are rule-compliant, and the students convincingly demonstrate that the workload of the exams is appropriate. The supervision of theses corresponds to the requirements.

The compensation for disadvantages is regulated in § 13 of the Framework Study and Examination Regulations. After their approval by the rector, the examination regulations were subjected to a legal examination and published. The examination regulations contain regulations for the recognition of university and non-academic achievements. This is in implementation of the Lisbon Convention.

The study progress is traceable online, the examination requirements are clearly communicated, and the requirements for the completion of a module are announced with sufficient anticipation. The requirements arising from the particular profile of the program are clearly communicated and are made available online to all stakeholders. The evaluation group agrees that the study conditions are adequate. The final feedback from the students confirms this impression.

4. Orientation in the occupational field

Graduates are expected to be able to transform intercultural and transnational conflicts that are present in a concrete "social world", especially in the field of action of national and transnational non-governmental organizations.

Addressing the real social conflicts of their own environment should enable graduates, above all, to develop professionalism, which should in turn enable them to put their acquired theoretical and methodological knowledge into practice and reflect upon it. Beyond this, the livlab approach should itself become a field of learning and practice in which students and teachers can jointly learn from and with conflicts about their analysis and transformation.

Assessment:

The occupational field orientation is provided in full. The consistently and holistically implemented practice-oriented livlab concept, in combination with the moderated reflection on professional and conflict experiences available from the very heterogeneous student group, offers a learning field that optimally prepares the students for later application in real contexts. The mediation module, in particular, teaches everyday practical theoretical-methodical tools for generating alternative solutions in conflict situations. Due to the fact that the occupational field here is international, there is no employer consultation for this study program, but one Alumni survey shows that the majority of respondents are working in the targeted areas of intercultural refugee work, migration, development cooperation, peace mediation, and adult education in international NGOs.

5. Human and material resources

Teaching in this study program is mainly undertaken by contract lecturers and two professors (in secondary office) who, according to the university, have been involved in the program for years and are familiar with the concept and used to teach in both languages. As per the university report, there has been little change of teachers since the last accreditation.

According to the university, measures for personnel development and qualification are offered also for the contract lecturers.

According to the application, material, spatial and financial resources are also available. The students have all the resources of the university at their disposal. The program seeks to provide access to international journals and to extend the current spectrum of the ASH library.

Assessment:

Advanced educational programs at universities can and should not usually be catered for primarily with the full-time staff if this impairs their capacity for serving the undergraduate programs. It is therefore necessary to make extensive use of external staff. This is also the case with this program.

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Although the servicing of study programs through predominantly teaching assignments can be seen as generally problematic, it can be stated for this program: In this case, the strong coverage of the teaching by contract lecturers does not seem to be problematic, since both the university administration and the study program management have assured that long-term commitments to suitable teaching staff exist and are cultivated, and that in the event of a sudden drop-out an equivalent replacement can be provided on short notice. This guarantees reliable support for the students. The lecturers are involved in continuous communication with the full-time staff for the purpose of ongoing development of the courses and are thus continuously further qualified themselves.

The evaluation group was persuaded of the sufficient material and spatial equipment after having asked the students and the teachers. It complies with the usual standards at universities, which implies that there is room for optimization, without the observable deficiencies significantly impairing the success of the study process. In this program, students demonstrated compelling improvisations to deal productively with temporary space shortages, which is facilitated by the use of privately available new interactive media.

6. Quality assurance

In terms of quality assurance at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin, the focus is on securing and further developing the quality of study and teaching. Central criteria are the professional qualification and the didactic and communicative abilities of the teachers, as well as a high quality of study and teaching-learning conditions. According to the university, university-wide teaching evaluations and graduate surveys are carried out to this purpose, specific information and counseling offerings are designed, and structures and measures are introduced to support the didactic qualification and competence of the teachers. The Department of Evaluation and Quality Management is responsible for university-wide quality management. The central tasks of this department include cooperation in the development and documentation of the quality objectives, as well as the continuous review of their implementation-status with regard to the achievement of the objectives.

In the study programs, the actual workload is recorded through the direct exchange between teachers and students. In addition, team discussions, meetings with program coordinators, course spokespersons, module- and teachers' conferences are used with the goal of harmonizing the seminar-related and examination requirements and to avoid time-consuming consolidations.

The university states that results from the university-wide and program-related quality assurance system are discussed at the level of university management (regular meetings of the university management with the program director), the various bodies of the university (Academic Senate, committees of academic self-government) and in the various programs (university teaching staff, contract lecturers, students).

Assessment:

The measures for quality assurance appear sufficient for the program. This is also particularly attributable to the high personal commitment of the teachers involved. The evaluation of the courses is carried out on a regular basis through the university-wide online evaluation system QUAMP. The results of a student-permanence study were presented during the on-site visit. The surveyed students confirm that their suggestions for improving the teaching and framework conditions for studying are heard, taken seriously and implemented insofar possible. The university management is also in intensive exchange with the program management to guarantee quality assurance. It regularly receives the results of the evaluations of courses, gets interesting aspects pointed out, and discusses optimization opportunities if necessary.

7. Summary of the Monita

Monita:

■ The university should bring the terminology into accordance with the KMK guidelines. This change is purely formal and does not require any change in the study concept. After this adjustment has been made, the exam concept would also be consistent with the requirement of "one exam per module".

III. Recommended decision

Criterion 2.1: Qualification goals of the study program concept

The program concept is based on qualification goals. These include technical and interdisciplinary aspects and relate in particular to the areas

- · scientific or artistic ability
- ability to take up a qualified job
- · aptitude for social engagement
- and personality development

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.2: Conceptional classification of the study program in the educational system

The degree program corresponds to

- (1) the requirements of the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees, dated 21.04.2005, in its currently valid version,
- (2) the requirements of the Common Structural Requirements of the federal states (*Länder*) for the accreditation of Bachelor and Master programs, dated 10.10.2003, in its currently valid version,
- (3) the federal state's specific structural requirements for the accreditation of bachelor's and master's programs,
- (4) the binding interpretation and summary of (1) to (3) by the Accreditation Commission.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.3: Program concept

The study program concept covers the transfer of disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge, as well as technical, methodical and generic competences.

The combination of the individual modules is coherently structured with regard to the formulated qualification goals, and provides for adequate forms of teaching and learning. Practical phases, if applicable, are designed so that credit points (ECTS) can be earned.

The conditions for admission and, where appropriate, an adequate selection procedure are laid down, as well as the rules for the recognition of previous performance at other universities in accordance with the Lisbon Convention, and of extra-curricular performance proofs. Regulations for disadvantage compensation for students with disabilities are met. Foreseeable student mobility windows are included in the curriculum.

The study organization ensures the implementation of the program concept.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.4: Framework conditions for studying

Adequate framework conditions for studying in the program are guaranteed by:

- the consideration of the expected initial qualifications,
- a suitable curriculum design
- student workload checked for plausibility (or, in the case of initial accreditation, according to estimated values from previous experience),
- an adequate and balanced examination density and organization,
- corresponding counselling services, as well as
- disciplinary and transdisciplinary student orientation.

The interests of students with disabilities are taken into account.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.5: Evaluation system

The examinations serve to determine whether the formulated qualification goals have been achieved. They are module-related as well as knowledge and competence-oriented. Each module usually concludes with a full module examination. The compensation for disadvantages for disabled students is ensured with regard to time and formal requirements in the course of their studies, as well as regarding all final or course-related credits. The examination regulations were subject to a legal examination.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.6: Program-related cooperations

In the event that the university should involve or commissions other organizations to carry out parts of the program, it guarantees the implementation and quality of the program concept. The scope and nature of existing collaborations with other universities, private companies, and other institutions are properly described, and the agreements underlying the cooperation documented.

This criterion is not applicable

Criterion 2.7: Equipment

The adequate implementation of the program is ensured with regard to the qualitative and quantitative personnel, material, and spatial endowment. At the same time, interconnections with other study programs are considered. Measures for personnel development and qualification are in place.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.8: Transparency and documentation

Program description, order of study, examination and admission requirements including compensatory regulations for students with disabilities are documented and published.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.9: Quality assurance and further development

The results of internal quality management are taken into account for the further development of the program. To this purpose, the university takes into account evaluation results, examinations of the student workload, indicators of study success and of graduates who stay actively connected with the university.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.10: Study programs with a special profile

Study programs with a special profile meet special requirements. The aforementioned criteria and procedural rules shall apply in the light of these requirements.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

Criterion 2.11: Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

The university concepts on gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special life circumstances, such as students with health impairments, students with children, foreign students, students with a migration background and / or from so-called educationally deprived classes, are also implemented at the level of the study program.

Based on the above assessment, the criterion is considered fulfilled.

For further development of the study program, the evaluation group gives the following recommendation:

■ The university should bring the terminology into accordance with the KMK guidelines. This change is purely formal and does not require any change in the study concept. After this adjustment has been made, the exam concept would also be consistent with the requirement of "one exam per module".

The evaluation group recommends that the Accreditation Commission of AQAS grants the study program "Intercultural Conflict Management - Social Action in Global Contexts" at the Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin leading to the degree "Master of Arts" the unconditional accreditation.