

# HEIGUALLTY MANUAL STUDENT AFFAIRS AND TEACHING



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## PREFACE

This document describes the processes of quality assurance and development in the context of heiQUALITY Student Affairs and Teaching which are mandatory for Heidelberg University. The Rectorate of Heidelberg University approved these processes in its meeting on **July 13, 2022**.

With heiQUALITY Student Affairs and Teaching Heidelberg University ensures its high performance in this central area on a medium- and long-term level and further develops its quality while also taking into consideration changing conditions. The quality awareness and quality culture of heiQUALITY are based on the following principles:

- focusing on freedom in research and teaching,
- ensuring a balance between the main interests of a progressive scientific institution, decentralised research and teaching profiles as well as structurally innovative research centres,
- strengthening the University's autonomy in regard to performance eval,
- ensuring and further developing a high level of quality awareness and pronounced individual responsibility among the university staff, expressed by a respective quality culture,
- preventing bureaucratic and centralised control,
- sticking to the principle of equality between men and women and promoting diversity in all areas, and particularly in the processes of quality assurance and development.

To enhance continual improvement, heiQUALITY focuses on promoting and maintaining a culture of quality through information and communication, participation and responsibility, critically constructive dialogue and contextualisation, as well as through learning with and from each other. These features are essential to identify improvement potentials and to develop strategies to use them. The heiQUALITY process of continual improvement is supported by the communication concept which is central to Heidelberg University's overall communication strategy.

In order to fulfil heiQUALITY's main purpose, namely turning Heidelberg University into a world's leading institutions in research and research-based teaching, distinct quality policies and standards, strategic concepts and diverse techniques as well as instruments for operational implementation, must be defined. To this end, the results of the instruments are included into quality control loops on various levels. The quality control loops that represent the foundation for establishing and developing a quality culture follow the classic "Plan-Do-Check-Act" ("PDCA") approach that constitutes a process of continual improvement:

- P: Analysis of the current situation based on the results from evaluation tools, set targets (target situation) and define measures designated to meet them;
- D: Implementation of the planned measures;
- C: Evaluation of whether measures were successful, and targets were met, assessment of results;
- A: Revision of targets and measures, adapt them to new situations, keep the achieved quality standards.

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## **1. TEACHING MODEL**

The Senate had already decided on a general qualification profile for graduates of Heidelberg University in June 2012: "In line with Heidelberg University's mission statement and constitution, degree programmes are designed to provide a comprehensive academic education, incorporating subject-specific, cross-disciplinary, and career-related objectives that prepare students for their career." This qualification profile is valid for all disciplines of graduates from Heidelberg University:

- subject-specific skills, with a particular emphasis on research;
- transdisciplinary dialogue skills
- practice-oriented problem-solving skills
- personal and social skills
- willingness to assume social responsibility on the basis of the skills acquired

Upon decision of the Senate, a preamble with the qualification profile for all graduates from Heidelberg University was successively incorporated into the module handbooks of all degree programmes offered at the University. The individual qualification profile of each degree programme and its learning objectives on a module and course level base on this general profile. They are subject of evaluation in the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) which includes their implementation within the degree programmes. A specific qualification profile based on that general qualification profile was also developed for the Master of Education, a joined degree programme by Heidelberg University and Heidelberg University of Education.

Under the responsibility of the Vice-Rector Student Affairs and Teaching a teaching model was developed together with the faculties after the completion of the first cycle of the internal accreditation procedures (Q+Ampel-Klausuren) in the summer semester 2018 which means after the implementation of heiQUALITY Student Affairs and Teaching for the whole university. It bases on the general mission statement of the University as well as the qualification profile for all graduates from Heidelberg University approved by the Senate in 2012. It thereby forms the strategic framework for teaching at Heidelberg University and was approved by the Senate in the winter semester 2019/20.

## **2. OFFERING A DEGREE PROGRAMME**

Offering their degree programmes is the faculties' and study units' main task within the scope of student affairs and teaching and it is a complex task. In order to complete the various subtasks related, study units and faculties have access to a wide range of services in the context of quality assurance and quality development that are presented hereinafter.

### **2.1 FINDING SUITABLE STUDENTS**

It is an important task of the study units to find suitable students for the offered degree programme. A prerequisite is that the modules and courses offered in the specific degree programme match the interests, expectations and required skills of the students. The first important step in order to provide relevant information is providing prospective students with a description of the programmes offered – particularly on the central webpages of the University.

Furthermore, the study units use their own, decentralised webpages to attract suitable students and provide more detailed information online, which are also subject of evaluation in the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren).

### **2.2 GUIDING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, ENROLLED STUDENTS AND GRADUATES**

The decentralised academic advisory service in each study unit is responsible for the guidance of prospective and enrolled students in regard to the content and structure of their degree programme, study requirements and course of examinations etc., as well as the guidance of graduates during the

transition to a profession or into another phase of academic education, supported by internship exchange and alumni networks. There also exist additional and central academic advisory services:

The **Service Portal** of Heidelberg University can be contacted via email, telephone and in-person for all questions of prospective students, enrolled students and graduates, and is supported by the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching and the Division of International Relations. In addition to the Service Portal, the specialised departments of these divisions are ready to answer more complex requests and give individual advice:

- Student Administration Office (application procedure, admission and enrolment, change of degree programme, leave of absence and de-registration etc.).
- Central Student Advisory Office / Career Service (individual consultations and information on starting university, course of studies as well as on entering employment and a wide range of courses and events),
- Information Centre of Heidelberg School of Education (information for prospective and enrolled students of teaching degrees),
- Division of International Relations (advice and services for prospective international students and enrolled international students, as well as information on studies abroad and exchange programmes).

The officers for disabled and chronically ill students at Heidelberg University (the so-called “**Handicap-Team**“ in the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching) advise students and prospective students on central questions about studying with a disability or chronic disease. They support students in overcoming disability and disease-related obstacles during their course of studies (from choosing the subject to finding employment). They offer detailed information online and a counselling service via email, telephone or in a personal exchange. The exact planning of their studies is essential for students with disabilities and chronic diseases to be able to graduate successfully. In collaboration with the academic advisory service and the examination office of the respective study unit, the responsible officers therefore advise these students on the individual management of their studies and ensure the compensation of disadvantages due to disabilities or diseases, i.e. by organising extended examination time, assistance in writing or the use of adequate assistive devices. An information brochure, which raises awareness for the situation of affected students, including a description of possibilities for the compensation of disadvantages, has been created for University teaching staff. If problems cannot be solved bilaterally, the officers will mediate between the students involved and the respective offices or teaching staff.

**Students with children** can access a broad range of support offers by the University, the Student Services Organisation (Studierendenwerk), the municipality and the federal state. The Studierendenwerk Heidelberg for instance provides concrete support for students with children:

- childcare in crèches and nurseries
- arrangement of cheap housing for single parent students and families
- information about financial support possibilities and important points of contact
- social and legal advice
- free meals in the frame of the initiative “Mensa for Kids”

### **2.3 IMPLEMENTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Equal Opportunities Office is the service unit for gender equality and equal opportunity related issues, as well as for the implementation of the University’s mission statement, in which the University takes on responsibility for diversity and equal opportunities of its members. The University advocates equal opportunities and the compatibility of family and career. Apart from systematically promoting female junior researchers and introducing subject-specific equality measures, the University therefore aims to improve the conditions for academic careers and a sustainable planning of life with family and children. The Equal Opportunities Office additionally advises the study units, institutes and faculties of the University, as well as the research networks on questions regarding equal opportunities and supports them in the development and implementation of respective measures (Gender Consulting). It advises students and scientists on questions regarding education and continuing education, career planning and research funding, as well as in difficult situations and in legal and social questions regarding equal opportunities.

## 2.4 ATTRACTING TEACHING STAFF

Teaching staff play an essential role in ensuring the quality of a degree programme. It is therefore a central task for the faculties and study units to attract the best teaching staff for their degree programmes and support them in additional training measures. Numerous central services are available accordingly.

Central services are of utmost importance as many different parties are involved in an appointment procedure. The contact persons in the Human Resources Department of the University Administration support the complex process of this procedure by making it as transparent as possible and by offering additional support where required. This way the Human Resources Department, for example forms a link between faculties, institutes, and University Administration and acts as the central coordinating and supporting party in the negotiations. Furthermore, the Human Resources Department provides guidelines containing the most important information, data and documents on appointment procedures at Heidelberg University. Another career path is currently being established with the tenure-track professorship next to the habilitation (postdoctoral qualification), heads of junior research groups and junior professorship in Heidelberg. In addition to the research performance, the teaching performance forms an important criterion for all appointment and evaluation procedures.

The Dual Career Service also plays a vital role in the context of appointment negotiations by providing comprehensive advice and information to partners and families of newly appointed professors, postdocs, as well as heads of junior research groups when transferring to Heidelberg. Of further importance in the context of appointment procedures are the services offered by the Equal Opportunities Office: To be mentioned here are for instance the support for families of appointed staff in finding childcare placements and in choosing adequate schools. The Equal Opportunities Office furthermore provides a central online tutorial to train members of the appointment committee while the Equal Opportunities Commissioners for academic staff and students of the faculties accompany the procedure on the decentralised level. The teaching skills/qualification of the applicant is of great importance already during appointment procedures to fill a professorship. Each faculty of Heidelberg University verifies and documents these skills in a different manner, while taking into consideration the generally applicable regulations of the higher education law Baden Württemberg (Landeshochschulgesetz, LHG): Every faculty formulates specific quality criteria and requirements that are of particular relevance to the faculty and therefore to its applicants, and which have to be documented in the cause of the appointment procedure. These could include, for instance:

- Proof of teaching quality in application texts (e.g., list of carried out lectures and courses incl. evaluation results, teaching prizes, higher education didactic certificates, supervision of final exams and doctorates),
- submission of an educational concept paper,
- submission of external reviews on previous teaching performances,
- submission of a teaching portfolio,
- responses to questions relating to teaching concepts and previous teaching experience as part of the appointment lecture with special emphasis on student questions
- holding a specific “lecture presentation” (Sample lecture in which the applicant does not explicitly present personal research results but, instead, demonstrates how she/he would teach a course.)

The Department for Teaching and Learning of the heiSKILLS Competencies and Language Centre provides the guideline paper *Teaching in Appointment Procedures (Lehre in Berufungsverfahren)*. It provides the faculties with a broad spectrum of examples of how they can check the teaching skills of their applicants.

## 2.5 ADVANCED TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

There are numerous offers to support and upskill teachers and degree programme coordinators:

The **heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning** offers a systematic didactic training for tutors in the context of the Heidelberg Tutor Certificate for supportive teaching formats, as well as customised offers for study units upon request (e.g., specific didactic workshops for teaching staff) and advice on the (further) development of competence-oriented curriculums if required. The Department offers a comprehensive consultation and advanced training programmes to all academic teachers

within the framework of the university didactic centre of the Baden-Württemberg universities. The qualification for the ministerial Baden-Württemberg Certificate for Higher Education Didactics (ministerielles Baden-Württemberg-Zertifikat für Hochschuldidaktik) follows international standards, comprises 200 training hours and is offered in cooperation of all Baden-Württemberg universities. The training consists of seminars, teaching hospitations, as well as teaching coaching and final written exams. Innovative teaching projects are often piloted during the training, e.g., with focus on research-oriented learning, which can later on be incorporated into regular teaching. The university didactic seminars and the consultation are committed to the principle of the Scholarship of Teaching and encourage teachers to apply their discipline-specific research methods also to the further development of their own teaching. These projects are presented on a regular basis in the Meet2Talk series, video recordings of the presentations are available on the Good-Practice platform. Written drafts, final examinations from the certificate process, as well as other innovative teaching-learning projects are published – upon request of the teachers – in the online journal *HINT: Heidelberg Inspirations for Innovative Teaching*, in order to promote the intramural discourse about good teaching and innovative formats.

Furthermore, the Department of **Human Resources Development and Dual Career Service** offers target group-specific courses/seminars, particularly for young scientists in the heiTRACKS programme.

## **2.6 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COURSES AND MODULES**

The heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning is willing to help the faculties, study units, degree programme coordinators and teaching staff in the planning and conceptional preparation of courses and modules. The heiSKILLS Department for Scientific Training and Lifelong Learning offering numerous services and advice to faculties and study units is to be contacted for the design of modules in the context of continuing-education master's programmes. Services for the evaluation of courses and modules are offered by the heiQUALITY office.

The organisation and administration of the examinations as part of the modules are carried out on a decentralised level by the study units at Heidelberg University. In order to implement certain common quality standards, the persons responsible in the examination offices, as well as interested representatives of the study units and Faculty QM Advisors meet once per semester in a forum organised by the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching in which the participants can discuss legal issues.

## **2.7 EXCHANGING IDEAS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER**

Over the past years in order to promote the exchange about important topics in teaching and in the design of degree programmes, numerous study units organised their own "Day of Teaching - Tag der Lehre", often with the involvement of the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning. Additionally, once a year the Vice-Rector Student Affairs and Teaching organises the university-wide "Day of Teaching" during which the public award of the Baden-Württemberg Certificates of Higher Education Didactics takes place, to which students and teaching staff of all faculties, deans of studies, QM Advisors, and senate's representatives for quality development (SBQE) are invited.

Furthermore, the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning based on the initiative of dedicated teachers established further exchange forums to facilitate university-wide networking: The series Meet2Talk invites to an informal exchange of experiences on innovative teaching projects at Heidelberg University on a quarterly basis since 2017. A short presentation with discussion afterwards takes place in a relaxed atmosphere. The presentations are recorded and are available on the Good-Practice platform at any time. In 2020, a journal went online with the support of the University Library, in which teachers document their innovative teaching projects continuously and present it to the university public.

### 3. CONCEPT ACCREDITATION: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW DEGREE PROGRAMME

The design and implementation procedure of a new degree programme is divided into four phases: Concept – elaboration – approval by university bodies – implementation.

#### Concept

The impulse for the design of a new degree programme originates from a study unit and the responsible faculty: This is where the idea of a degree programme evolves, e.g., because the unit would like to further develop its teaching profile. This idea is presented in the department committee<sup>1</sup> (Fachrat, institute/seminar level) or in the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission). If the faculty council shows positive interest in the idea, the study unit contacts the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching involving the QM advisor. The Division appoints a person, who coordinates the entire process of the implementation. Once the contact with the coordinating person is made, a kick-off meeting will be arranged. The kick-off meeting takes place with the goal to present the entire process to the study unit, as well as the relevant services in this process, in order to maintain the quality-relevant standards right from the start. At the same time this first encounter allows all parties involved in the process to meet, as there are:

- responsible study unit representatives,
- QM Advisor of the faculty,
- Division of Student Affairs and Teaching: all relevant departments or persons, particularly the coordinating person of the entire process, a legal advisor to answer legal questions, a person in charge of the admission procedure to answer respective questions, a person from the Central Student Advisory Office in order to share experience from this point of view, one person for teaching capacity matters,
- heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning (curriculum development, generic competencies, training of tutors, forms of teaching, learning and assessment, competence orientation), as well as Department for Scientific Training and Lifelong Learning (in continuing-education master's degree programmes),
- International Relations Division (only if an international degree programme is planned and if questions regarding the admission of international applicants might be relevant),
- heiQUALITY office (issues relevant for accreditation, module handbooks, external reviews).

Possible obstacles in the implementation process can be identified at an early stage during the kick-off meeting, and solutions can already be considered. A preliminary schedule is discussed, and the different steps of the process are agreed upon together.

After this meeting, the study unit will work on the concept of the degree programme. It should focus particularly on the following components: Overall objectives and explicit learning outcomes of the degree programme also as demarcation to already existing degree programmes, level (Bachelor's/Master's) and contents of the degree programme, target group and intended cohort sizes, graduate profile and qualification objectives, planned modules, forms of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as financing and sustainability.

During the entire process, the study unit and the QM Advisor are advised and supported by the above-mentioned service facilities. The final concept is then presented in the Rectorate via the head of the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching. In case of positive feedback, the implementation process goes into the second phase. The Rectorate may however also decline the concept because the planned degree programme does not fit into the overall strategy of the University or return the concept

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<sup>1</sup> At Heidelberg University, the department committee (Fachrat) was established in 2010 under the involvement of all relevant stakeholder students included as an additional university board in faculties with many study units/degree programmes, in order to relieve the work of the faculty commissions for study and teaching. The committees perform preliminary work to prepare decisions that have to be taken by the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission). They develop and coordinate suggestions and concepts with respect to studies, teaching and the related tasks within a study unit, e.g., discussion, conception and elaboration of new degree programmes, as well as further development of existing degree programmes. Basis of the work of the department committees is the decision of the Senate of Heidelberg University to establish department committees from December 14, 2010, and the respective statute. If there are four or less study units at one faculty, the faculty council can decide to establish one faculty commission for study and teaching for every study unit instead.

to the study unit for further elaboration. In that case, there is the opportunity to resubmit a revised concept to the Rectorate.

Already during this first phase (working on a concept), but also during the entire next phase (elaboration, see next section), the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning is available for advice on all issues regarding curriculum development or implementation of a competence-oriented, innovative concept. The study unit can decide if it wants to be advised personally or if it prefers to only use the numerous online sources e.g. guideline papers and workshops about course and curriculum planning.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there are also online courses for the acquisition of generic skills available, that can be used directly for the curriculum (e.g., introduction into scientific writing, study skills such as *learning to learn*, *study in a motivated and independent manner* and *time management*).

### **Elaboration**

During the further elaboration of the new degree programme, external academic, vocational and student reviewers render a written report. Based on these expert reports the study unit creates and finalises the relevant documents (admissions regulations, examination rules and regulations, module handbook, teaching capacity analysis) in close collaboration with the above-mentioned involved parties.

An external academic reviewer as well as an external vocational and an external student reviewer render a written report on the degree programme concept approved by the Rectorate: The study unit may submit three suggestions for each external reviewer<sup>3</sup> adhering to defined criteria and giving a reason why these persons are suitable for the evaluation. The heiQUALITY checks the criteria based on the information available online and forwards the results to the Vice-Rector Quality Development, which decides on the ranking and, if necessary, the exclusion of reviewers. The heiQUALITY office contacts the reviewers in the determined order. They write their report based on a standardised set of questions via EvaSys online survey. As soon as the heiQUALITY office receives all three reports, they are sent to the study unit and the QM Advisor. The results of the reports are to be discussed in the department committee (Fachrat, if existing) or in the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission) where the weak points detected by the reviewers should also be analysed and if adequate be included in the further development of the degree programme. Additionally, the study unit issues an official statement on the expert reports that are later on presented to the Senate Commission Teaching (SAL).

At the same time, the responsible person in the study unit works on all the relevant regulations (rules and examination regulations, tuition fee regulations, admission regulations, if necessary further regulations) with the support of the QM Advisor and in consultation with the responsible legal expert of the Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching. The module handbook is created with the support of the QM Advisor and in consultation with the responsible person at the heiQUALITY office. Therefore, a template for module handbooks can be used, which entails all relevant and legal specifications. Regarding the contents of the Diploma Supplement and the Transcripts of Records, the heiQUALITY office informs on a regular basis the QM Advisors about the valid specifications, who forward them to the study units.

If the new degree programme is intended to be in cooperation with one or more national or international institutions of higher education, an additional cooperation agreement must be concluded, in which since 2016, the criteria for a joint quality assurance and development are to be defined. It is the own responsibility of the study unit and/or faculty board, to stipulate and coordinate the cooperation with the partner university involving the Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching and the International Relations Division.

Another important component of the elaboration phase is the teaching capacity analysis: In cooperation with the study unit, the capacity calculator of the University determines whether or not the teaching resources within the study unit are sufficient to ensure the required courses considering all degree programmes offered by the unit. The results of the analysis are presented to the SAL.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/slk/nutzbar/>

<sup>3</sup> When establishing and accrediting theological degree programmes or degree programmes related to teacher or psychotherapeutic trainings, the vocational reviewer to be involved is not designated by the university, but by the responsible regional church, the Ministry of Education and/or the regional council.

Prior to the approval of the documents by the university bodies, the coordinating person of the overall process in the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching checks if all documents reviewed by the different responsible departments, are consistent and complete.

### **Approval by university bodies**

After the checked documents were approved by the department committee (Fachrat, if existing), these are presented to the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission). Afterwards they have to be approved by the faculty council. Every superordinate board can return the documents for further elaboration to the subordinate board. If there is a positive vote by the faculty bodies, the documents are sent via the QM Advisor of the Faculty with the vote results to the office of the Senate Commission Teaching (Senatsausschuss Lehre - SAL) in the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching.

The final versions of all relevant documents (the examination rules and regulations, the admission regulations, the module handbook and the external reviews including the statement of the study unit) are required for the presentation to the SAL. The tuition fee regulations and the cooperation agreement with a respective quality assurance clause are also required at that time, if it is a degree programme that is subject to charges or a cooperation degree programme. The results of the Teaching Capacity Analysis are forwarded to the office of the SAL directly by the office within the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching that is responsible for the calculations of the capacity.

As soon as the new degree programme is approved by the SAL, the office of the SAL submits the required documents via the official channel to the Senate and then to the University Council. The coordinating person within the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching informs the persons involved in the procedure about the result of the decision taken in the Senate. After the University Council approved the new degree programme, the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching applies for the implementation approval of the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, Baden-Württemberg (MWK) and applies for approval of further institutions that possibly need to be involved: e.g., Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs or the protestant regional church (Oberlandeskirche).

### **Implementation**

After receipt of the approval letter of the MWK, the coordinating person of the overall process within the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching forwards the required information to the responsible persons and further involved parties and ensures that the regulations of the new degree programme can be published in the bulletin of the Rector.

With the publication in the bulletin of the Rector, the quality-ensured implementation process is completed, and the new degree programme is legally valid. Subsequently, the degree programme receives a certificate of accreditation issued by the heiQUALITY office with the date of the publication. The concept accreditation is valid for eight years.

Parallel to this, all necessary university-internal steps are initiated by the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching, in order to conclude the implementation of the new degree programme (online publishing of the legally valid regulations, informing the University Computing Centre in order to set up a subject key, to incorporate the degree programme into the Campus Management System etc.).

## **4. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND RE-ACCREDITATION OF A DEGREE PROGRAMME**

The further development of degree programmes is a continuous process that is part of the permanent work of different faculty bodies, such as the department committee (Fachrat, if existing) and the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission), as well as for some study units additional working groups. Beyond these natural further developments, it also requires formalised processes for further development as described hereinafter. There are often operative improvements with regard to the everyday university life and its organisation, that for instance are worked out and implemented during dialogues between teaching staff and students. If these improvements require formal decisions by the faculty bodies, they are made by the department committee (if existing) and in the faculty commission for study and teaching. Further developments pertaining to the formal rules and regulations of a degree programme are categorised as follows:

- simple and significant amendments: further development from within the study unit,
- first cohort Monitoring: first evaluation after implementation of a new degree programme,
- Q+Ampel-Verfahren: internal evaluation procedure for systematic quality assurance and development of degree programmes for re-accreditation/re-certification.

#### 4.1 SIMPLE AND SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS

Some further developments of a degree programme require the revision of documents, such as for instance the examination rules and regulations, admission regulations, or other regulations. It is important to distinguish between simple and significant amendments.

Significant amendments, which change the nature of the degree programme and/or of the graduate profile, may have an impact on the accreditation. The heiQUALITY office and the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching recommend describing respective plannings in the study unit report to be submitted within the framework of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren (during the procedure of a Q+Ampel-Klausur or a Monitoring, see Chapter 4.3). This way the internal evaluators (senate's representatives for quality development, SBQE) and the Rectorate, as the accrediting body, are informed and can assess the changes in line with the ongoing evaluation procedure. After the assessment and evaluation by the SBQE, all the documents including the planned changes are forwarded to the Rectorate for the final decision. At the same time, amendments in the respective regulations can already be prepared by the study unit in close coordination with the Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching via the QM Advisor of the faculty. The documents are however only presented in the Senate in case the Rectorate agrees.

If a study unit has to implement significant amendments that do not fall on one of the evaluation phases of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren, the SBQE team – if possible, the one that supported the study unit in the previous phase of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren – receives a short description of the planned changes including the reasons for the changes (approx. one page). In addition to that and if possible, it receives the respectively adapted documents that should however not have yet passed all the faculty bodies in order to be able to make any further changes. If the amendments affect important content-related aspects, the SBQE team can consult in exceptional cases external experts for support. The study unit bears the respective costs. After reviewing the documents subject to changes, the explanations given by the study unit, and, where necessary, the reports of the external experts, the senate's representatives recommend to the Rectorate whether the current accreditation of the amended degree programme remains valid or if a new accreditation procedure shall be initiated. If the senate's representatives opt for maintaining the valid accreditation, the formal adoption process within the university bodies can be continued. The recommendation of the senate's representative is presented to the Rectorate when it is deciding to present the amendments to the Senate. If the Rectorate agrees with the recommendation of the SBQE, and if the Senate agrees to the amendments, the respective regulations can become valid through the publication in the bulletin of the Rector. The accreditation of the amended degree programme remains valid. No new accreditation certificate is issued. If the senate's representatives decide in favour of the initiation of a new accreditation procedure, the heiQUALITY office presents this recommendation as fast as possible to the Rectorate. If the Rectorate follows the recommendation of the senate's representative, the amendment process can only be completed once the accreditation procedure is completed with a positive accreditation certificate.

For the realisation of simple amendments that do not substantially change the degree programme, they undergo the implementation process similar to the phases 2–4, however without external reviewers and usually without teaching capacity analysis (see Chapter 3). The following principles apply to simple and significant amendments:

- When submitting amendments in examination rules and regulations to the Senate Commission Teaching (SAL), the faculty states if these changes result from requirements or recommendations from the Rectorate after a Q+Ampel-Verfahren. The QM Advisor of the responsible faculty is invited as a guest to the meeting of the SAL, in order to be available in case of questions and to explain the ideas and decisions of the study unit and the faculty.
- At the end of the process, every amendment is published in the bulletin of the Rector, in order to be legally effective.

## 4.2 FIRST COHORT MONITORING

The systematic quality assurance and development of new degree programmes takes place through the first cohort monitoring. This process introduced to Heidelberg University in 2014, systematically evaluates all degree programmes at an early stage after implementation, in order to check how successful this phase has been, how well the degree programme has been accepted and if relevant changes and measures are necessary. This so called first cohort monitoring (EKM)<sup>4</sup>, which takes place four years after the beginning of the first classes, includes a strengths and weaknesses analysis based on key performance indicators (such as beginner cohorts, drop-out and transition rates), course and study programme survey results<sup>5</sup>.

If a degree programme's EKM is approximately (+/- one year) planned at the same time as the Q+Ampel-Klausur of the responsible study unit, the new degree programme is reviewed and re-accredited at this very moment together with the other degree programmes of the study unit. If the EKM (+/- one year) falls into the period of the monitoring of the respective study unit, the EKM takes place simultaneously.

The most important questions that are to be answered during a first cohort monitoring are the following: Which strengths does the degree programme have, what works well? What changes have been made since the implementation? How have the number of students developed so far? Does the degree programme enable smooth student progression (particularly adequate student workload, classes without overlaps) and how is it ensured? What difficulties do the students and teachers/degree programme coordinators see and what changes/further developments are planned in order to overcome them? The process of a regular first cohort monitoring that does not take place in line with a Q+Ampel-Klausur, is as follows:

### ***Step 1: Data collection (heiQUALITY office and study unit)***

The data collection begins with the first day of class; this is the moment when the first key performance indicators (KPI) on the first cohorts are available which will then be continuously updated in the student database. The Controlling and Reporting Department in the University Administration that collaborates closely with the heiQUALITY office collects all relevant KPI of the first semesters to create a complete report for the EKM. Even course surveys (Lehrveranstaltungsbefragungen - LVB) can already be conducted during the first semester of the degree programme, if this is what the department has decided for its evaluation cycle. In accordance with the university's evaluation regulations all courses offered by a study unit and accordingly by each teacher have to be evaluated at the latest every two years. Thus, there are always aggregated evaluation results available for the first cohort monitoring. In collaboration with the respective study unit, the evaluation office as part of the heiQUALITY office is responsible for the entire process of the course survey, reporting included. In the framework of a first cohort monitoring, a degree programme survey (SGB) is also mandatory. All students of the degree programme are invited via email to participate. The evaluation office is also responsible for this instrument, in collaboration with the respective study unit.

### ***Step 2 Data processing and report of the study unit and of the SBQE team (heiQUALITY office, study unit and SBQE)***

When all data is available, the heiQUALITY office generates a process documentation (Q+Ampel-Dokumentation) containing all the relevant KPI and survey results. The study unit receives this documentation and the detailed reports on the KPI and on all the conducted surveys with the request to submit a written statement about the data and the most relevant conclusions of the first semesters with respect to the quality of the degree programme. The study unit discusses the data and development of the degree programme so far, as well as strengths, improvement potentials and enhancements in the relevant faculty bodies (department committee (Fachrat, if existing), faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission) and in some cases special working groups), where the corresponding report written by the study unit also is to be approved. The study unit afterwards sends the report to the heiQUALITY office which forwards the whole documentation including the report of the study unit and the detailed reports on the KPI and on the conducted surveys to the SBQE team, which is composed in accordance with the criteria mentioned in Chapter 4.3 (Step 3). Its task is to assess and comment on the report of the study unit and the development of the degree programme, and if necessary, to pronounce recommendations and requirements, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/universitaet/qualitaetssicherung-und-entwicklung/studium-und-lehre/qampel-verfahren/erstkohorten-monitoring-neu-eingerichteter-studiengaenge>

<sup>5</sup> The instruments are presented in Chapter 4.3.1.

topics that should be monitored in the following years and discussed in the following Q-Ampel-Verfahren (see Chapter 4.3). The SBQE team sends the documentation along with its own report back to the heiQUALITY office.

***Step 3: Presentation of the results in the Rectorate and feedback to the study unit (Rectorate, heiQUALITY office)***

The heiQUALITY office presents the whole documentation including the report of the study unit and the SBQE team to the Rectorate. The Rectorate discusses the results and decides on specific trends to be monitored and topics to be discussed in the following Q+Ampel-Verfahren. The study unit receives a respective evaluation letter issued by the Vice-Rector Quality Development.

### **4.3 INTERNAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE FOR QUALITY DEVELOPMENT (Q+AMPEL-VERFAHREN)**

All degree programmes offered at Heidelberg University are usually accredited and re-accredited for eight years in line with the Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg (study accreditation regulation) valid since 2018. Every eight years a new internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) starts for every degree programme. The first evaluation phase of this procedure is the Q+Ampel-Klausur which ends with a (re-) accreditation certification issued by the Rectorate. During the second evaluation phase, four years after (re-) accreditation, the degree programme passes into the monitoring phase, in which all data is reviewed and the efficiency of already implemented measures is checked. During the Q+Ampel-Klausur, one external academic, one vocational and one student expert are included in the process, usually exclusively in written form. The internal evaluators (SBQE), as well as the Rectorate, are involved in the Q+Ampel-Klausur and the Monitoring.

The Q+Ampel-Verfahren follows the classical "Plan-Do-Check-Act" ("PDCA") approach. This means that for every degree programme data based strengths and weaknesses analysis of all quality criteria are carried out, from which measures are derived, implemented and monitored (incl. the fulfilment of requirements). The effects of the measures are analysed based on new data collection, and respective measures are taken if necessary. Re-accreditations (for bachelor and master's degree programmes) and re-certifications (for state examination degree programmes) also take place in the frame of the Q-Ampel-Verfahren every eight years.

***Basis of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren***

The basis of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren are the quality criteria that were first developed in 2010 by the members of the Rectorate's QM working group student affairs and teaching and enhanced over the course of the years. A guideline paper to go along with the so-called Q+Ampel-Dokumentation defines and operationalises these quality criteria valid for all degree programmes at Heidelberg University. They embody all criteria to be met for a successful (re-)accreditation fixed in the relevant legislation (Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg, 2018). Beyond that, they also embody criteria important for Heidelberg University, such as the interdisciplinarity and internationality of its degree programmes. All degree programmes at Heidelberg University are to meet the quality criteria which are regularly checked in the framework of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. If necessary, e.g., in case of updates of the regulatory framework, the criteria and instruments are adapted by the working group QM Student Affairs and Teaching and approved by the Rectorate. The heiQUALITY office communicates the updates to the faculties by informing the QM Advisors and by online publishing the updates. Furthermore, every study unit and their student representatives (Fachschaft) that will undergo the accreditation process (Q+Ampel-Klausur) in the near future, is informed about all the details of the process, its instruments and updates. The Q-Ampel-Verfahren with its instruments and responsibilities is also defined in the evaluation regulations of Heidelberg University.

***Course of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren (version 2 since winter semester 2019/20)***

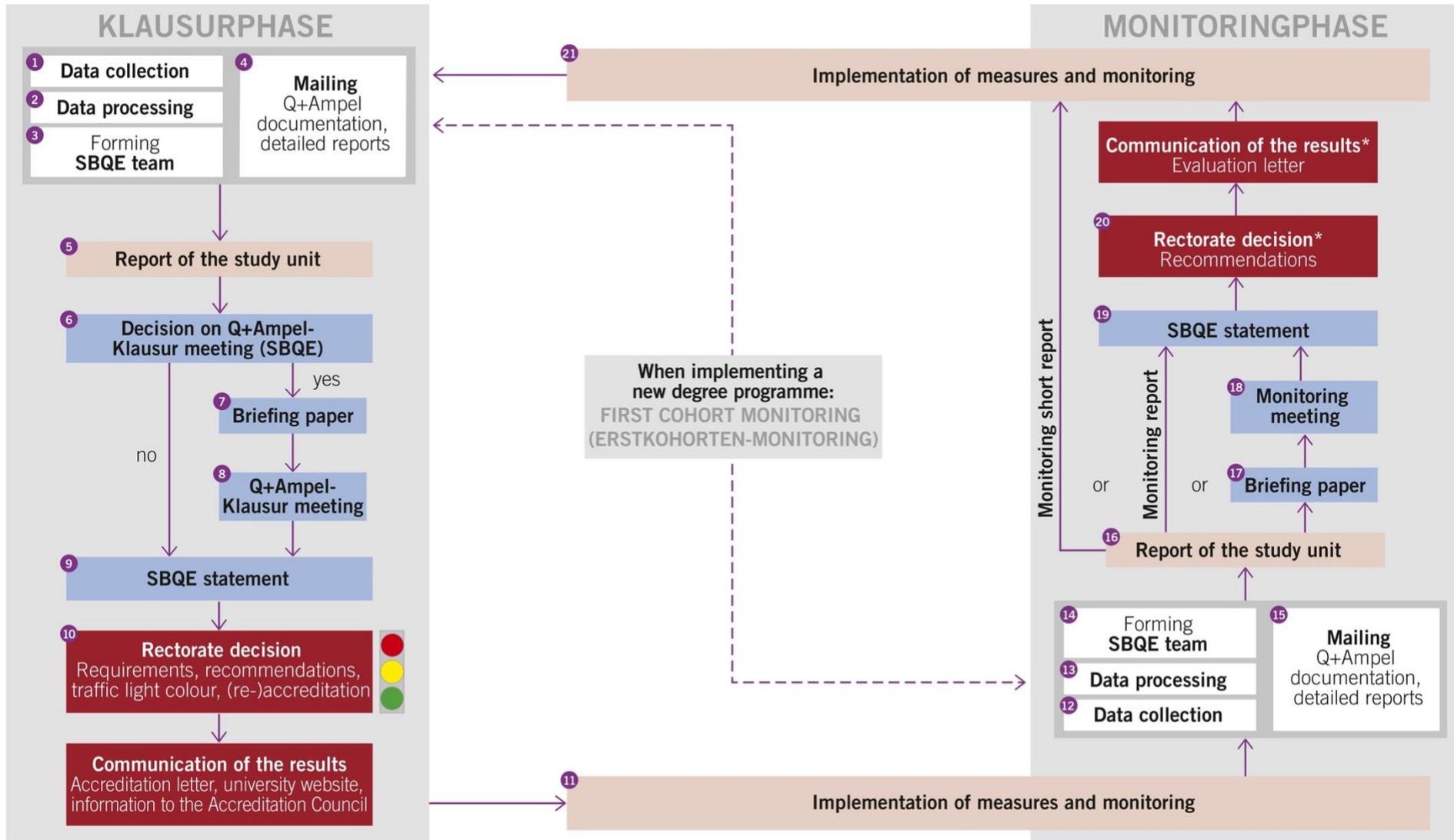
The Q+Ampel-Verfahren is implemented as a continuous, cyclic quality assurance and quality development procedure, which does not have a beginning or end because all degree programmes of Heidelberg University are permanently in the process of evaluation now that the system has been fully established. It consists of two phases or rather two evaluation procedures: the Q+Ampel-Klausur, at the end of which the evaluated degree programme is to be (re-)accredited for a period of eight years, and the Monitoring, which takes place four years after the Q+Ampel-Klausur. The evaluation unit in a Q+Ampel-Verfahren is an institute or a faculty with all the degree programmes they account for.

The Q+Ampel-Verfahren is carried out the same way in all study units and for all degree programmes, including the programmes followed by a state examination and those with a particular profile requirement. There are only some minor differences with respect to the instruments, in order to meet structural specifications of these particular programmes. The quality criteria of Heidelberg University apply to all degree programmes equally and are evaluated in the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. The processes presented hereinafter apply to the Q+Ampel-Verfahren according to version 2, which is being implemented since the winter semester 2019/20. Version 1 of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren, as described in the heiQUALITY manual from 2014, is only used for degree programmes that are in their first evaluation cycle and part of a newly established institution which integrates new stakeholders in the system.

### ***Information and preparation***

Before starting with the first step in the Q+Ampel-Verfahren which is the data collection, the heiQUALITY office contacts the student representatives of the respective study units and offers a meeting, to present the Q+Ampel-Verfahren, to motivate the students to participate as well in the upcoming surveys as in the evaluation procedure itself, and to answer any other questions. What comes next are the study programme surveys which are organized in close contact with the respective study units and involving the QM Advisor of the faculty. Usually during the semester prior to the Q+Ampel-Klausur, the representatives of the study units that are to be evaluated and the QM Advisor are invited to an information meeting. Questions with regards to the course of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren and the required steps are discussed in this meeting. Apart from important topics such as the timeline for the data collection and the information about the responsibilities within the procedure, these meetings aim at answering any open questions, especially if there have been changes in the system.

# Q+AMPEL-VERFAHREN



\* In some cases, the accreditation is extended during the monitoring phase. In this case, requirements may be pronounced, the result is published on the university website and communicated to the Accreditation Council.

### Step 1: Data collection (heiQUALITY office and study unit)

The data collection is coordinated and mainly completed by the heiQUALITY office, always after consultation with the respective study unit. More detailed information can be found in Chapter 4.3.1 and online. The following table provides an overview over the instruments, their purpose, and the respective responsibilities:

Instrument	Objective/purpose	Responsibilities
Course survey (Lehrveranstaltungsbefragung; LVB)	Collection: quality of courses from the viewpoint of the students based on five defined criteria; quantification of workload	<b>heiQUALITY office:</b> service and coordination of the survey, evaluations <b>Study unit:</b> survey (teaching staff and students)
Study programme survey (Studiengangbefragung; SGB)	Collection: relevant structural features of the curricula: structure, examination density and organisation, workload, academic advisory service etc.	<b>heiQUALITY office:</b> service and survey, evaluations <b>Study unit:</b> motivation for participation
Graduate survey (Absolventenbefragung; ABS)	Collection: acquisition of skills in the course of study, further academic career; preparation for professional activities; areas of occupation, employment modalities, further career paths and how they build on the skills acquired during the course of study	<b>heiQUALITY office:</b> implementations, evaluations
Subject enquiry	Assessment: competence-oriented wording and publishing of subject-specific and generic qualification objectives, adequate design of module handbooks according to formal guidelines, Diploma Supplements, Transcripts of Records, information accessible to students online, student integration (in university bodies etc.), promotion of student mobility, collaboration with other faculties or institutions of higher education	<b>heiQUALITY office:</b> coordination of the enquiry, evaluations <b>Study unit:</b> enquiry
External academic review	Review with a defined set of questions: structure and concept of the degree programme with focus on specialised contents and profile based on relevant key performance indicators (KPI) on the academic success as well as the online information of the degree programme.	<b>Study unit:</b> suggestions for reviewers <b>Vice-Rectorate:</b> selection of reviewers <b>heiQUALITY office:</b> coordination (incl. request for reviewers)
External student review	Review with a defined set of questions: structure and concept of the degree programme with focus on attractiveness and the smooth student progression based on relevant key performance indicators (KPI) on the academic success as well as the online information of the degree programme.	<b>Study unit:</b> suggestions for reviewers <b>Vice-Rectorate:</b> selection of reviewers <b>heiQUALITY office:</b> coordination (incl. request for reviewers)
External vocational review	Review with a defined set of questions: structure and concept of the degree programme with focus on graduate profile and professional perspectives based on relevant key performance indicators (KPI) on the academic success as well as the online information of the degree programme.	<b>Study unit:</b> suggestions for reviewers <sup>6</sup> <b>Vice-Rectorate:</b> selection of reviewers <b>heiQUALITY office:</b> coordination (incl. request for reviewers)
Key performance indicator reports	Information: cohort developments, drop-out and graduate rates, average duration of study, graduates per semesters Additional evaluation reports about atypical study paths (information: student behaviour, including significant prolongation of the regular duration of	<b>heiQUALITY office:</b> coordination, evaluation of atypical paths of study <b>Controlling and Reporting Department:</b> key performance indicator reports

<sup>6</sup> When establishing and accrediting theological or education-related degree programmes or degree programmes with psychotherapeutic orientation, the reviewer to be involved as a representative of professional practice is not designated by the stud unit, but by the responsible national church, the Ministry of Education and/or the Regional Council.

Instrument	Objective/purpose	Responsibilities
	study, frequent change of subjects, inactive ("parking") students as well as students with "credit point delay")	<b>Study unit:</b> feedback
Teaching capacity tool	Analysis: offered compulsory and elective courses, student/lecturer ratio, teaching according to sources of financing	<b>heiQUALITY office and capacity calculator in the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching:</b> analysis, evaluation <b>Study unit:</b> feedback

Parallel to the here described data collection, the heiQUALITY office contacts the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching, the Legal Service for Student Affairs and Teaching, as well as the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning and informs them about pending procedures. The colleagues then check the legal status of the study-relevant regulations (rules and examination regulations and if necessary, others) and the module handbooks regarding competence-oriented wording of qualification and learning objectives.

With the help of a checklist the results of the legal revision of the study-relevant regulations are sent to the heiQUALITY office. The heiQUALITY office then forwards them to the study units via the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation by putting them into requirements and recommendations. This way they can integrate the formal revision of the regulations into their action plan for further development of the degree programmes at an early stage.

The review of the module handbooks with focus on competence-oriented wording of the qualification and learning objectives takes place through the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning. The department gives written feedback with recommendations for improving the qualification and learning objectives, as well as the teaching-learning examination formats. This written feedback is also sent to the study unit, together with the offer of using the advisory service of the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning if required. Parallel to that, the heiQUALITY office reviews the module handbooks based on the above described subject enquiry with focus on the formal requirements.

### **Step 2: Data processing (heiQUALITY office)**

As soon as the results of all instruments are available, the heiQUALITY office compiles the data and generates a summarising process documentation (Q+Ampel-Dokumentation). The study unit is the first to receive this documentation together with the detailed report for each instrument. Based on the quality criteria of Heidelberg University, the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation summarises for every relevant degree programme the results of all instruments. The results are depicted based on threshold values in accordance with the colours of a traffic light. The threshold values, which were determined in the QM working group Student Affairs and Teaching, and their corresponding colours (green, yellow, red) provide an initial heuristic distinction of the specific results gained from the evaluation tools. Threshold values and traffic light colours do not represent an absolute value but intend to facilitate the recognition of strengths and possible problem areas by the study unit itself and later on by the SBQE.

The Q+Ampel-Dokumentation also serves the purpose of process documentation and shows the development of the respective values over the course of time. In a direct comparison of current and earlier evaluation results, the development of quality criteria in a degree programme becomes apparent and it can be evaluated how successful implemented measures were. The Q+Ampel-Dokumentation additionally offers all required information in order to further develop the respective programme or to correct the action plan based on concrete and well-founded numbers and facts.

### **Steps 3 and 4: Forming the SBQE team and mailing the documents (heiQUALITY office)**

While preparing the data, the heiQUALITY office forms an internal evaluator team consisting of SBQE for the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. Within the team a balance between proximity and distance from the study unit is aspired, so that on the one hand the understanding of the specifics of the respective study unit and on the other hand the interdisciplinary exchange is ensured. This is why the heiQUALITY office also chooses SBQE of the respective scientific culture, however not members of the same faculty. This way a possible bias or an overly close connection between study unit and senate's representatives are avoided. At the same time, it is explicitly part of the concept that members of different disciplines of Heidelberg University exchange their views on further developing the degree

programmes in order to promote thinking outside the box and to look into internal organisation and communication procedures. Depending on the individual availability, the heiQUALITY office ensures by forming the teams that

- the SBQE involved are not members of the faculty whose degree programmes are subject of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren,
- all status groups (professors, academic staff, students) are represented with at least one person and
- as many scientific cultures as possible are represented.

Thus, Heidelberg University considers its senate's representatives for quality development as university-internal, but subject-external evaluators.

As soon as the data processing is completed, the study unit receives all data. The mailing of the documents (incl. the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation, detailed reports and a template for the report of the study unit) officially starts the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. There are approximately six months between starting the data collection and mailing the processed results to the study unit. As soon as the SBQE team has been formed, the heiQUALITY office will inform the study unit about its members. Beforehand, every study unit may voice concerns about individual SBQE from the current pool. The Vice-Rector Quality Development decides in these cases if individual SBQE will be exempt from certain Q+Ampel-Verfahren.

#### ***Step 5: Report of the study unit on the results (study unit)***

The study unit has approximately five months after receiving the documents to discuss them in its decentralised bodies (department committee (Fachrat)/faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission)) involving students and other stakeholders, to evaluate effects of already implemented measures, and to develop an action plan for future quality development. In doing so, quality assurance is to be focused (all relevant documents have to comply with legal requirements) as well as former and future quality development of the relevant degree programmes. The most important aspect of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren in this step is that the study unit discusses in its relevant bodies the results involving students and other stakeholders and comments on the present data, implemented measures and achieved effects, as well as further developments in the future. This report is to be included in the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation, so that the quality criteria are directly related to data, effects and deviated (future) measures. The study unit itself assesses its degree programmes and their past quality development in this step. It also declares if it considers a meeting with the SBQE team useful, and if yes, what topics should be discussed during that meeting. The study unit forwards the entire Q+Ampel-Dokumentation, including its report, to the heiQUALITY office, which will forward it to the SBQE team, incl. the detailed reports of the evaluation tools. These are important, because it is where for instance the free text responses of students in the study programme survey are to be found. They often provide a contextualised answer on how some evaluations in specific quality criteria come about to be. Students may also mention points relevant to them in the free text fields that are not part of the closed items.

#### ***Step 6: Decision on a Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting (SBQE)***

The heiQUALITY office organises a meeting between the SBQE team and members of the heiQUALITY office, in which the SBQE discuss and evaluate the report of the study unit in the context of all available documents. Based on the data and the report of the study unit, the SBQE team decides on a (preliminary) traffic light colour for the degree programmes and subsequently takes a decision on whether or not meeting with the study unit. If there is no action or only minor action required (the preliminary traffic light colour is green (no requirements) or green-yellow), no Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting is necessary. Under consideration of the study unit's wish for a meeting, the SBQE team decides if a Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting will take place. A Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting can also be omitted when the preliminary traffic light colour is yellow-green or yellow, if the Q+Ampel-Klausur is the first evaluation procedure after establishing a new degree programme or if it takes place shortly after implementing or planning reforms that are depicted convincingly in the report of the study unit. A Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting is mandatory when the traffic light is yellow-red, red-yellow or red.

The following steps 7 and 8 are omitted if study unit and SBQE team decide against a Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting.

**Step 7: Briefing paper (SBQE and heiQUALITY office)**

If the decision on a Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting is positive, the SBQE set the topics during the meeting with the heiQUALITY office (see step 6) also considering possible topics set by the study unit. The heiQUALITY office forwards the briefing paper to the study unit approximately two weeks prior to the Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting. It is intended as a preparation for the discussion with the senate's representatives. If the SBQE desire additional information from the study unit in order to be able to closer discuss certain points during the meeting, this request is also included in the briefing paper.

In their meeting with the heiQUALITY office, the SBQE appoint a chairperson of the SBQE team, who is responsible for chairing the Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting and providing a consented report by the SBQE later on (see Step 9). The heiQUALITY office has the following tasks during the meeting with the SBQE and afterwards: moderation, writing the minutes, ensuring a proper and timely proceeding, providing (background) information with respect to the evaluation tools and results, writing the briefing paper as a record of the meeting and mailing it to the study unit.

**Step 8: Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting (SBQE, study unit and heiQUALITY office)**

There are usually two hours per study unit scheduled for a constructive-critical discussion of the topics mentioned in the briefing paper. The SBQE team, representatives of the study unit (usually one to three professors, representatives of the academic staff, and students), as well as two members of the heiQUALITY office take part in the meeting.

One member of the heiQUALITY office as the coordinating unit opens the meeting, informs about its course, points out further procedural steps and the timing after the Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting. Over the course of the meeting, this person also ensures that the timeframe is respected, all topics are discussed (if possible), and that all involved parties get a chance to speak. The second member of the heiQUALITY office writes the minutes.

After a brief welcome by the SBQE team and an introduction of all participants (approx. five minutes), the SBQE chairperson states the strengths of the study unit identified by the SBQE and the main topics in the sense of an agenda (approx. ten minutes). The study unit then has the opportunity to present key information about the institution and its degree programmes, and to touch upon select points from the report with respect to the topics mentioned beforehand by the SBQE. Subsequently, the main topics and evaluation results are jointly analysed, discussed and contextualised (approx. 1 to 1.5 hours). A main objective of the meeting is to find answers to the questions that have emerged from the report of the study unit, in order to avoid misunderstandings and to identify further development potentials taking into consideration the specific background and scientific culture, as well as the structure of the respective degree programmes. Over the course of the meeting, it is quite possible that e.g., areas that based on the threshold values and the written report of the study unit were initially set as red in the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation and therefore potentially critical, are assessed as not problematic. It is also possible that results, which were initially set as little problematic indicate an immediate need for action when more information are given.

After the meeting with all stakeholders, the senate's representatives stay for another approx. 15 minutes to discuss certain topics only with the student representatives of the study unit. In this neutral setting, the students may show their perspective in more details and address specific wishes. The comments of the students made during these 15 minutes will only be recorded in the minutes sent to the SBQE. This way, the students' concerns can be incorporated into the statement of the SBQE without violating the safe setting intended by this separate meeting.

Finally, the senate's representatives discuss the identified strengths and problem areas as well as their recommendations and requirements (approx. one hour). They determine the bullet points of their statement (strengths, critical areas, as well as appropriate recommendations and requirements) and decide consensually on a traffic light colour to be recommended to the Rectorate, as an overall evaluation of every assessed degree programme (taking into account the traffic light colour preliminary given in Step 6).

**Step 9: SBQE statement (SBQE and heiQUALITY office)**

The heiQUALITY office prepares a draft of the statement in accordance with the specifications given by the SBQE. The SBQE amend the draft and their chairperson forwards the consented version that all senate's representatives agreed upon to the heiQUALITY office. It shall contain the following elements:

Since every degree programme shows strengths and potential for improvement, both aspects should be included in the SBQE statement. Thus, within the quality management of the study unit, both QM components are addressed: quality assurance that aims at maintaining an already achieved high level with appropriate measures, and quality development that aims at using potentials by implementing new measures to further develop and improve quality. Considering the specific background of the study unit, the senate's representatives recommend which quality criteria could be improved and, in some cases, how this could be achieved. These recommendations are suggestions that are made by senate's representatives due to their expertise and that the study unit should consider, implement them in its own way and use them for its quality development.

In contrast to recommendations, requirements are not an option, but have to be fulfilled. Requirements may relate to two different categories of criteria:

- **Formal** requirements of documents/papers: If module handbooks, examination rules and regulations or other study-relevant, legally binding documents present errors relevant for accreditation, there is always a requirement to fix deficiencies within one year. Formal requirements are already known prior to a possible meeting since all documents are reviewed beforehand by the respective departments in the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching and by the heiQUALITY office.
- **Content-related** requirements on quality aspects of the course of study: If it becomes apparent through the explanations of the study unit that there are certain deficiencies relevant for accreditation in the course of study or structure of a degree programme, the senate's representatives pronounce a corresponding requirement. Different stakeholders of a study unit may be affected by this requirement: students, teaching staff, academic advisors, examination office, etc. In critical cases if the impact on the course of studies is so severe that a closer analysis of the cause and a comprehensive measure planning must take place - yellow-red or red traffic light colour – the Q+Ampel-Klausur may be followed by a Monitoring meeting (see below) scheduled by the Rectorate.

If there is no Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting, the SBQE statement is prepared directly after the decision against a meeting (Step 6). The above-described criteria and approaches are identical. The statement and the evaluation of the degree programmes are in this case only based on the present data and the written report of the study unit.

#### ***Step 10: Rectorate decision (Rectorate, prepared by the heiQUALITY office)***

The SBQE statement including the report of the study unit is forwarded to the Vice-Rectorate Quality Development by the heiQUALITY office and then discussed in the Rectorate. The senate's representatives recommend to the Rectorate the accreditation of the reviewed degree programmes if they consider and assess the action plan and report of the study unit as adequate (after a possible Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting). If requirements were set, a (re-)accreditation is recommended subject to the proof of fulfilling these requirements within one year. The (re-)accreditation is usually valid for a period of eight years marked by the beginning of the semester in which the accreditation decision took place.

If the Rectorate agrees with the assessments of the senate's representatives, the Rectorate awards the (re-)accreditation. The study unit receives a written response by the Rectorate including the following documents:

- an official letter with the assessment of the Rectorate with regard to the relevant degree programmes (incl. a traffic light colour), as well as the schedule and topics of the next evaluation procedure,
- a certificate of accreditation of Heidelberg University to confirm that the respective degree programme successfully completed the internal accreditation procedure of Heidelberg University and is therefore approved to carry the Accreditation Council's seal of the accreditation,
- the SBQE statement.

If the Rectorate's decision differs from the assessments (recommendations, requirements) of the senate's representatives, this would also be explained in the accreditation letter.

The certificates of all accreditations are published on the central webpages of the University. An accreditation report is also written and published by the heiQUALITY office for each degree

programme that has successfully been accredited. It contains the following information and is also forwarded to the external evaluators:

- basic information on the degree programme in accordance with the accreditation council's standards, short profile of the degree programme,
- summarised information on the accreditation decision,
- report on the checking of the formal criteria,
- report on the checking of the content-related criteria by the internal and external reviewers: summaries (conclusions)
- information on the Q+Ampel-Verfahren of Heidelberg University.

The heiQUALITY office forwards the Rectorate's decision to the responsible SBQE team and informs the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching about the results. This information is relevant in order to apply in time for the extension of the implementation approval for the degree programme by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, Baden-Württemberg (MWK), which requires the proof of a successful (re-)accreditation. The results are also of importance to the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning, in order to be able to provide advice and support to the study units and faculties in further developing their degree programmes. The heiQUALITY office finally informs the Accreditation Council about the results of the procedure.

***Step 11: Implementation of measures and monitoring (study unit and heiQUALITY office)***

As soon as the study units receive the Rectorate's decision, they start implementing the planned measures. If requirements have been set, the study unit has one year to fulfil them; the Rectorate decides on their fulfilment. On the decentralised level, the QM Advisor in the responsible faculty monitors these requirements and accordingly watches their fulfilment within the deadline. On the central level the heiQUALITY is in charge. If the deadline or an extension previously approved by the Vice-Rector Quality Development upon request of the study unit is not met, the accreditation will be withdrawn.

***Steps 12 to 20: Evaluation procedure Monitoring (study unit, SBQE, heiQUALITY office and Rectorate)***

The Monitoring starts as a second evaluation procedure after four years, during which the degree programmes are newly reviewed. The steps 1–7 will repeat (usually without a meeting between SBQE and study unit). The Q-Ampel-Dokumentation which is called Monitoring report in this phase summarises the results of the previous evaluation procedure (including requirements and recommendations) as well as fresh survey results and key performance indicators. External reviewers, the subject enquiry and the teaching capacity tool are no standard instruments in this evaluation procedure. The documentation will be sent to the study unit to integrate a written report on the latest developments. This report is then presented to the senate's representatives (if possible, the same team as in the Q+Ampel-Klausur), who will evaluate it and make recommendations to the Rectorate with regard to measures and topics for the next Q+Ampel-Klausur. At the end of the evaluation procedure, the department receives another evaluation letter from the Rectorate and the statement of SBQE.

The main objectives of the Monitoring documenting the implemented measures, evaluating their preliminary success and counteracting in case of unfavourable developments. If the results of the evaluation tools summarised in the Monitoring report reveal "warning signals" (e.g., significant worsening in one area), the senate's representative and Rectorate recommend if necessary immediate counteractions. In the case of positive developments in the study unit, senate's representatives and Rectorate only take note of the Monitoring report without providing further recommendations leaving responsibility on the decentralised level. The heiQUALITY office also uses the monitoring report to remind the study unit about all amendments that will have to be implemented in each degree programme by its next Q+Ampel-Klausur (re-accreditation). The heiQUALITY office always informs the faculties' QM Advisors directly in case of amendments relevant for the accreditation, who will then forward this information to their study units. This gives them the opportunity to take action before the next re-accreditation procedure in accordance with their own schedule. Requirements are usually not imposed during the Monitoring procedure, except if severe legal deficiencies and/or those that disable smooth student progression become visible.

An alternative to the regular monitoring procedure in exclusively written form described above (= Monitoring report) is the Monitoring meeting. It takes place if

- extensive and complex reforms are to be implemented after a Q+Ampel-Klausur and their success cannot be reviewed only based on a written statement, or
- structural difficulties are identified that impact the course of studies. They usually come along with a respective traffic light evaluation of the degree programme (yellow or worse). If the study programme got a yellow traffic light evaluation, a Monitoring meeting can be scheduled, in a yellow-red evaluation or worse, a Monitoring meeting must take place.

In such cases, the Rectorate usually decides on a Monitoring meeting instead of a Monitoring report at the end of the Q+Ampel-Klausur upon recommendation of the SBQE. The Monitoring meeting can also take place at an earlier moment than the scheduled Monitoring report, depending on the specific problem or reform. Apart from the responsible SBQE team, usually the Vice-Rector Quality Development and if needed further persons, whose expertise is relevant to the successful implementation and assessment of the reform, take part in the Monitoring meeting, (e.g., officials of the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching). Who exactly is joining the meeting depends on the specific reform or problem and is decided by the Rectorate. The course of the Monitoring meeting is similar to the one of a Q+Ampel-Klausur. New data is collected (however usually without including external expertise, without the subject enquiry and without teaching capacity tool), the study unit writes a report with regards to measures taken and their effects and after the monitoring meeting the SBQE write their evaluation which will be discussed in the Rectorate together with the report of the study unit. Finally, the study unit receives an evaluation letter from the Rectorate with recommendations and, if necessary, requirements, as well as topics that are to be addressed in the next Q+Ampel-Verfahren.

Another variation of the monitoring report is the monitoring short report which is a combination of data analysis and written documentation of the further development of a degree programme without the SBQE and the Rectorate being involved. The monitoring short report aims at

- further strengthening the self-responsibility of study units and faculties in further developing their degree programmes,
- maintaining the benefits of data-based monitoring, and at the same time
- reducing the workload for all stakeholders.

In the monitoring short report, the SBQE recommend at the end of the Q+Ampel-Klausur phase, based on defined criteria (on the lines of the criteria for assigning evaluation colours for/against an Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting), whether SBQE and Rectorate should be involved in the following monitoring phase. This recommendation is to be explained in the SBQE statement. Even if the SBQE recommend a monitoring short report, the study unit may express the wish for a regular monitoring report. The Rectorate either agrees with the recommendation of the SBQE or gives reasons in the accreditation letter if it does not follow the recommendation.

However, the decision to issue a monitoring short report is to be revised during the monitoring phase if fresh data from the study programme survey indicate a threat to smooth student progression. In this case, either a regular monitoring report or a monitoring meeting will be scheduled.

In case of a monitoring short report, the study unit receives via the heiQUALITY office the Q+Ampel documentation with all relevant KPI, data from the course and study programme surveys, the associated detailed reports and, if applicable, information on all amendments that will have to be implemented in each degree programme by its next Q+Ampel-Klausur (re-accreditation). In order to record current developments (measures, effects, etc.), the study unit deals with the information and data forwarded in the Q+Ampel documentation. In doing so, the study unit can limit itself to short notes and critical points or insert a summary of the current status of measure implementations at the beginning of the document. The study unit submits the updated Q+Ampel documentation to the heiQUALITY office which will be presented to the SBQE only during the next Q+Ampel-Klausur phase when the short report will help the SBQE to evaluate the quality development of the study programme.

### ***Step 21: Implementation of measures and monitoring***

Similar to what happens after the Q+Ampel-Klausur, at the end of the Monitoring and before the beginning of a new Q+Ampel-Verfahren (next cycle) the study unit implements and monitors the discussed measures (see step 11). The design of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren allows reviewing

systematically the success of the implemented measures with the help of the results of the evaluation tools. During the next cycle of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren, the effects of the measures can already be checked on a medium- to long-term data base.

#### **4.3.1 Data collection and evaluation tools**

All details on the data collection required for the QMS are stipulated in the evaluation regulations of Heidelberg University. Further information about the following instruments can be found online<sup>7</sup>.

##### **Course survey/module survey**

Course surveys (Lehrveranstaltungsbefragungen; LVB) are carried out systematically since the beginning of winter semester 2009/10, in order to ensure and further develop the quality of teaching in the particular courses or modules. The evaluation regulations of Heidelberg University stipulate all necessary details.

Whereas each lecturer and/or module officer receives an evaluation report on its evaluated courses/modules, the dean of studies and the QM Advisor receive an evaluation report on all courses of a study unit evaluated in the respective semester or academic year. The report displays the most important results for each course and serves to further develop the offer. The dean of studies in collaboration with the faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission) is responsible for monitoring the quality and the quality development of each particular course. Each faculty has defined its own processes and responsibilities. An aggregated depiction of the faculties' annual quality reports is published in the context of the University reporting (see Chapter 4.3.2). As part of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren of each degree programme, aggregated results of the responsible study unit's LVB are also incorporated into the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation (student workload and quality of teaching).

##### **Study programme survey**

Study programme surveys (Studiengangbefragung; SGB) aim at recording the quality of current study conditions from the students' perspective. There is a core questionnaire mandatory for all study programmes that can be extended by questions specific to the study unit and/or faculty. The evaluation regulations of Heidelberg University stipulate the details. The evaluation office within the heiQUALITY office acts as advisor to the study units. The heiQUALITY office is also responsible for communicating with the study units as well as for preparing, implementing and evaluating the surveys.

##### **Graduate survey**

Since 2008, Heidelberg University has been conducting graduate surveys. About 1 to 1.5 years after graduation, all graduates of Heidelberg University are asked to give information about their professional fields and if the acquired skills during their studies have been a good base for the first career steps and the further professional development. The evaluation regulations of Heidelberg University stipulate the details. The heiQUALITY office is responsible for preparing, implementing, and evaluating the survey at Heidelberg University. The evaluation of the results takes place on university level and on the level of each study unit (especially for the validation and if necessary, the further development of qualification profiles of existing degree programmes). In the process of designing a new degree programme, the results can be used e.g., for developing the qualification profile and for closing gaps within the existing offer, but also to ensure that the strengths of the study unit is integrated in the new degree programme.

##### **Teaching capacity tool**

The Teaching Capacity Tool (Lehrkapazitätstool; LKT) checks if the available teaching staff is adequate to offer all necessary courses. The current situation (status quo) as well as potential future developments (e.g., increase in number of students, introduction of new degree programmes, maximal admission strength under current conditions) are taken into consideration. The Teaching Capacity Tool compares the number of courses (weekly contact hours) modelled on specific student demand and the teaching resources (weekly contact hours) available within the study unit. In addition to that, the study unit's teaching imports and exports are also taken into account.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/universitaet/qualitaetssicherung-und-entwicklung/studium-und-lehre/instrumente-und-berichtswesen>

### **Key performance indicators**

The key performance indicator report shows the progression of the cohorts and the academic success (number of graduates within a standard period of time, average duration of study) of the past years, in order to be able to determine if the degree programme enables a smooth student progression within a standard period of time. The report shows the progression of the cohorts of the past five years depicting drop out, transition and graduation rates. The academic success is based on the average duration of study and the number of graduates within a standard period of time. For degree programmes with more than one subject, the report shows the chosen subject combinations including drop-out and subject changes and/or changes in intended qualifications. For the latter, the newly chosen subject and/or the new qualification is listed. The additionally listed transition rate for Master's degree programmes depict the percentage of students who have already completed their Bachelor's degree programme at Heidelberg University. With regard to diversity, the results are also listed by gender and by differentiating between "German students/international students with a German university entrance qualification vs. international students without a German university entrance qualification". In order to compare a degree programme with the respective degree programmes of a faculty cluster, the key performance indicator report includes the comparative figures according to the faculty clusters of Heidelberg University (Natural Sciences/Mathematics/Computer Science, Humanities/Theology, Law/Economics and Social Sciences, Medicine).

### **Study unit enquiry**

Some relevant questions related to the assessment of quality in student affairs and teaching cannot be addressed with the help of student surveys or quantitative analyses. This includes the review of module handbooks (competence-oriented wording and publication of subject-specific and generic qualification objectives, adequate structure of module handbooks), Diploma Supplements, Transcripts of Records, information accessible to (prospective) students and other target groups, student integration into university bodies etc., student mobility, and collaborations with other faculties or institutions of higher education. These aspects are included in a short enquiry for each study unit: With the support of the faculty QM Advisor the person in charge fills out a form and sends it back to the heiQUALITY office together with the respective documents (Diploma Supplement, Transcript of Records, if applicable cooperation agreements). All aspects are checked and assessed based on a checklist. The review of the qualification and learning objectives based on the competence-oriented formulation takes place in the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning, which will forward the results of their review to the heiQUALITY office. The Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching reviews the study-relevant regulations (examination, fees and admission regulations etc.) and also informs the heiQUALITY office of the results. The heiQUALITY office includes all results in the Q+Ampel-Documentation.

### **External reviews**

In line with the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) every degree programme that has to be accredited will be reviewed by one external academic, one external vocational and one external student expert. The study unit may suggest three external experts each in accordance with defined criteria. The academic reviewer assesses the degree programme with respect to the structure and the concept focussing on specialised contents and profile. The focus of the vocational reviewer lies on the graduate profile and professional perspectives and that of the student reviewer on the degree programme's attractiveness and smooth student progression.

The heiQUALITY office checks the suitability of the suggested reviewers focussing on their impartiality. It then forwards the suggestions on the order in which the respective experts will be asked to participate in the evaluation procedure to the Vice-Rectorate Quality Development. The latter has to agree to the suggestions before the heiQUALITY office starts communicating with the reviewers. It sends them links with the most important information about the degree programme (including links to examination rules and regulations and the module handbook, information about the teaching staff, particularly professorships and information about possible cooperations) relevant KPI on academic success, as well as additional information that the study unit would like to provide to the reviewers. Based on this information the reviewers provide written replies to a defined set of questions<sup>8</sup>. The questions relate to the content-related criteria for study programmes stipulated in the Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg (study accreditation regulation) as well as on the quality criteria of Heidelberg University and will be included in the Q+Ampel-Documentation, where the study unit will integrate its

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to the information about the degree programme, the reviewer receives a guideline about the formulation of competence-oriented qualification objectives and the template for module handbooks, as well as a form to declare his/her impartiality.

report. The external experts do not participate in Q+Ampel-Klausur meetings (which are not mandatory for every degree programme). They can however be involved again into the process upon request of the study unit and/or SBQE and/or Rectorate. This may happen in oral or written form. External experts have to agree beforehand to the publication of their review's conclusion within the reporting system of Heidelberg University by name. A fee is paid for the rendered review.

### **4.3.2 Documentation and publication**

Communicating with all involved stakeholders, keeping them informed and being transparent about the processes, decisions and developments characterise heiQUALITY. The Vice-Rectorate Quality Development reports in all relevant university bodies (University Council, Senate, Senate Commission Teaching (SAL), the QM discussion group student affairs and teaching (QM-Runde) and the internal evaluators' (SBQE) conferences) on a regular basis about the current developments in heiQUALITY, interdisciplinary results and about the topics having been discussed in the latest Q+Ampel-Verfahren. The heiQUALITY office also informs the faculty QM advisors and the SBQE on the webpages and via mail about current changes in accreditation regulations. The faculty QM advisors and the SBQE spread the information within the faculties and study units. The monthly meetings between the heiQUALITY office and the faculty QM advisors serve the purpose of further developing the QM processes, exchanging information (e.g., coming from central-decentral working groups and about legal changes) and discussing the implementation of relevant changes. The exchange with the study units after the ending of their Q+Ampel-Verfahren takes place in a meta-evaluation meeting; the feedback given by the study unit is an important element for the continuous development and improvement of heiQUALITY (see Chapter 7.2 and 8).

#### **Results of the internal evaluation procedures for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) on degree programme level**

Every Q+Ampel-Verfahren is fully documented by the heiQUALITY office: All reports and statements by the study unit and by the SBQE including the relevant data are recorded within the Q+Ampel-Dokumentation, the detailed reports on each evaluation tool being added to it. The (re-)accreditation decision of the Rectorate for each degree programme is documented in an accreditation letter and a certificate of accreditation. Since the successful system accreditation of heiQUALITY at Heidelberg University in 2014, the results of every accreditation procedure are published online<sup>9</sup>. An accreditation report is issued and published for all degree programmes that underwent the internal accreditation procedure (Q+Ampel-Klausur) in the 2nd cycle, in line with § 29 of the Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg (study accreditation regulation). The heiQUALITY office also enters and updates the results of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren in the electronic information and application system 'ELEktronisches Informations- und AntragsSystem' (ELIAS) of the accreditation council. Once a semester, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg (MWK) receives via the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching a list of all lately (re-)accredited degree programmes including their accreditation duration. This information is necessary for the extension of the implementation approval for each degree programme by the ministry. The Division of Student Affairs and Teaching is responsible for this process and receives all necessary data from the heiQUALITY office. The heiQUALITY office additionally publishes the certificates of every newly accredited degree programme online.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Results of the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) on an interdisciplinary level**

Aggregate quality reports are published online on an annual basis in addition to the results of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren on a degree programme level. As of the academic year 2020, the aggregate quality reports include results of the following aspects:

- closed Q+Ampel-Verfahren (Q+Ampel-Klausuren, monitoring, first cohort monitoring) and (re-)accreditations or (re-)certifications (in case of programmes followed by a state examination),
- aggregate information about the traffic light colours resulting from the Q+Ampel-Klausuren,
- requirements and recommendations in accordance with the defined quality areas of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren,

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/universitaet/qualitaetssicherung-und-entwicklung/studium-und-lehre/ergebnisse-der-qualitaetssicherung/qualitaetsgesicherte-studiengaenge>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/studium/alle-studienfaecher>

- relevant topics from the Q+Ampel-Verfahren (subject-specific and interdisciplinary),
- good practice examples from the Q+Ampel-Verfahren ,
- selected and aggregate results from the survey tools of the respective Q+Ampel-Verfahren.

This provides an overall picture of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren conducted in the respective academic year and of the most important topics discussed, requirements set, recommendations made, and examples of good practices emerged from these procedures as well as an overall picture of the database from which the results of these procedure were derived. This kind of report allows for a longitudinal view of the quality development within the faculties over the course of several academic years. The annual report of the university also reports on heiQUALITY at the overall university level.

#### **4.4 REGULATED DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

The evaluation and (re-)accreditation of the regulated degree programmes offered at Heidelberg University take place within the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. According to § 25 section 1 of the Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg (study accreditation regulation) a representative of the Ministry of Education and/or a representative of the protestant regional church (Oberlandeskirche) is to be involved as external vocational experts in the accreditation process of degree programmes leading to a career in a school teaching or pastoral position. These representatives not only review the respective degree programme in a written form at the beginning of its Q+Ampel-Klausur. Since October 01, 2020, their consent is also needed prior to the Rectorate awarding the (re-)accreditation. The consent is based on the report of the senate's representatives and their accreditation recommendation (including required and recommended actions) on which the representatives are requested to comment, and, if applicable, pronounce further requirements and recommendations. Without the approval of the Ministry of Education and/or the respective church, the documents are not presented for decision to the Rectorate. In the case of other, e.g., state-regulated, degree programmes (e.g., for becoming a psychotherapist) the specific legal aspects valid for these programmes are considered and the needed experts incorporated into the respective Q+Ampel-Verfahren. The responsible study unit is free to integrate more vocational experts.

#### **4.5 COOPERATION ON INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL/JOINT PROGRAMMES**

The internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) is also applied for quality development and accreditation of national and international joint programmes. The question of responsibility for the accreditation process and joint quality development is regulated either in a framework agreement on quality assurance or in a quality clause, which is an essential part of every cooperation agreement of a newly implemented degree programme or to be incorporated into the cooperation agreement of already existing degree programmes, by the reaccreditation at the latest. If Heidelberg University is responsible for accreditation, representatives of the partner universities are always involved from the very beginning. Joint programmes with partner universities in the European Higher Education Area are also accredited within the framework of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren. Although the focus here lies on the parts Heidelberg University is responsible for, the joint quality assurance, and development of the entire degree programme is also subject to evaluation. Degree programmes offered by Heidelberg University outside of the European Higher Education Area alone or in cooperation, are also subject to the Q+Ampel-Verfahren.

Heidelberg University maintains cooperations and joint programmes with other system-accredited institutions of higher education. It does not, however, have a common QM system with another institution of higher education. If there are cooperations with other institutions of higher education, a quality assurance clause is integrated in the cooperation agreement both at the institution level and at the level of the respective degree programme. This clause includes joint perspectives of quality assurance and quality development and regulates how the joint QM processes, including (re)accreditation, are to be designed. However, the QM systems of the respective institution of higher education always remain independent from one another.

#### 4.6 ENSURING THE INDEPENDENCY OF QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

In the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren), quality assessments are carried out by different actors: the heiQUALITY office, external evaluators, internal evaluators (SBQE) and the Rectorate. The independence of their respective evaluations is ensured in various ways:

	Assessing stakeholders in the Q+Ampel-Verfahren			
	heiQUALITY office	external evaluators	internal evaluators (SBQE)	Rectorate
Standardised sets of questions		x		
Declaration of impartiality		x	x	
Defined criteria for excluding an evaluator		x	x	
Guideline papers (Q+Ampel-Documentation, template for module handbooks)	X	x	x	x
White paper, training, further education			x	
Standardised evaluation grid and criteria	X		x	x
Dialogue within the group aiming at a consensus	X		x	x

The heiQUALITY office - together with the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching - evaluates the formal criteria: The heiQUALITY office reviews the module handbooks in accordance with §§ 6–9 Study Accreditation Regulations (Studienakkreditierungsverordnung). The heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning checks the wording in the module handbooks as described above and is also available to the study units for in-depth consultations. Examination and admission regulations are the responsibility of the Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching.

The independence of external evaluators is ensured by defined and online published selection and exclusion criteria, and by their personal declaration of impartiality. . Standardised questions are the basis of the external review, which allow the evaluations to be as objective and comparable as possible. The heiQUALITY office also ensures through guideline papers – e.g., regarding the Q+Ampel-Documentation or the module handbook requirements - that all evaluating stakeholders assess the respective documents by using the same quality criteria. Subject of the review by external evaluators is the degree programme concept with focus on specialised content and profile (external academic review), with focus on attractiveness and the smooth student progression (external student review) and with focus on graduate profile and professional perspectives (external vocational review). Thus every degree programme that has to undergo re-accreditation in the Q+Ampel-Verfahren is assessed by three external evaluators, who write their review independently from each other. The study unit comments on the external reviews in its report to be rendered to the SBQE, particularly on the weak points. The SBQE then, as internal evaluators, assess the adequacy of the study unit's reaction on the external votes. In their statement, the SBQE pronounce requirements, for instance if the study unit does not provide sufficient argumentation as to why certain weak points relevant to accreditation are not taken care of and no measures are planned accordingly.

For the SBQE, there are also defined criteria to be met similar to those applied to external evaluators. Furthermore, peer review within the same faculty is not permitted. SBQE can also refuse to be involved in a Q+Ampel-Verfahren if they feel biased. Conversely, a study unit may also voice concerns over certain SBQE from the current pool, if bias is suspected.

In contrast to the external evaluators, who submit their reviews as individual persons, the SBQE act as a group (three to six persons), who assess the quality of a study programme recommending its (re-)accreditation to the Rectorate by aiming to find consensus through an internal discourse. Basis of the SBQE's assessments are the quality criteria of Heidelberg University that are clearly defined, described and operationalised in the guideline for the Q+Ampel-Documentation and that also include the current regulations of the Studienakkreditierungsverordnung Baden-Württemberg (study accreditation regulation)). The SBQE assess qualitatively whether the criteria are met based on the collected data and the study unit's report. They report their assessment in the SBQE statement by

reporting strengths and weaknesses, leaving comments and recommendations as well as, if necessary, requirements. On the basis of defined criteria published online, the SBQE decide in their conclusion on a traffic light colour for the degree programme and which topics should be discussed again in the next phase of the procedure (monitoring or next Q+Ampel-Klausur). Finally, the statement will be submitted to the Rectorate which takes the decision on the (re-)accreditation of each degree programme.

External evaluators are not directly involved in the internal accreditation procedure (Q+Ampel-Klausur), however, since the introduction of written external reviews they are always taken into account by the SBQE in their assessments. There is however the option of involving external evaluators again into the process after their written review. This may happen in oral or written form, and can be upon request of the study unit, the SBQE and/or Rectorate. The Rectorate being the (re-)accreditation awarding authority leads an internal discourse like the SBQE about the evaluation of the respective degree programme: The Rectorate has access to the complete documentation including all votes of external and internal evaluators, as well as the study unit's report. Prepared by the heiQUALITY office, the Rectorate thereby has a comprehensive basis for decision-making based on the quality criteria of Heidelberg University which are mandatory.

#### 4.7 INTERNAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Disagreement in the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) is possible in different moments of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren, both in the collaboration of centralised and decentralised bodies, as well as with stakeholders on a centralised and decentralised level. In heiQUALITY, dissent is always resolved in dialogue with all participants; this principle is an elementary component of the communication and quality culture of Heidelberg University and thus also an important heiQUALITY feature.

In most cases, a joint dialogue leads to the resolution of the disagreement. However, for the rare cases, in which this is not successful, clearing procedures are defined as a last resort:

- Disagreement **within a SBQE team**, e.g., about requirements, recommendations, deadlines, the traffic light colour, the evaluation of a study unit's action plan, or the debate in favour of or against a Q+Ampel-Klausur meeting: Clearing by the head of the heiQUALITY centre upon recommendation of an independent SBQE;
- Disagreements **within a study unit**, e. g. about the action plan, the report or the submission of a complaint about the course of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren: Clearing by the dean's office of the respective faculty involving the faculty QM advisor;
- Disagreement **between study unit and SBQE/heiQUALITY office** on the correctness of the procedure: Clearing by the head of the heiQUALITY centre;
- Disagreement **between faculty and Rectorate** about the results of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren (e.g., requirements or deadlines): Clearing by an internal arbitration body for internal accreditation decisions regulated by rules adopted by the Senate of the University.

A clearing should be implemented and concluded as quickly as possible, in order to avoid longer delays in the course of the procedure and to create clarity for all parties about the following steps.

### 5. DISCONTINUATION OF A DEGREE PROGRAMME

Possible reasons for the discontinuation of a degree programme are:

- The study unit requests the discontinuation – independently from the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) – usually due to a lack of demand from students.
- The study unit decides on its own or upon recommendation of the Rectorate on a discontinuation within the framework of a Q+Ampel-Verfahren because there are problems that are so severe that a smooth student progression can no longer be ensured. This can either take place directly after the current or in the following internal accreditation procedure (Q+Ampel-Klausur) if no sufficient improvements could be attained, and all feasible measures have been taken. In such a case, the faculty and the Rectorate must consider the discontinuation of the respective degree programme.

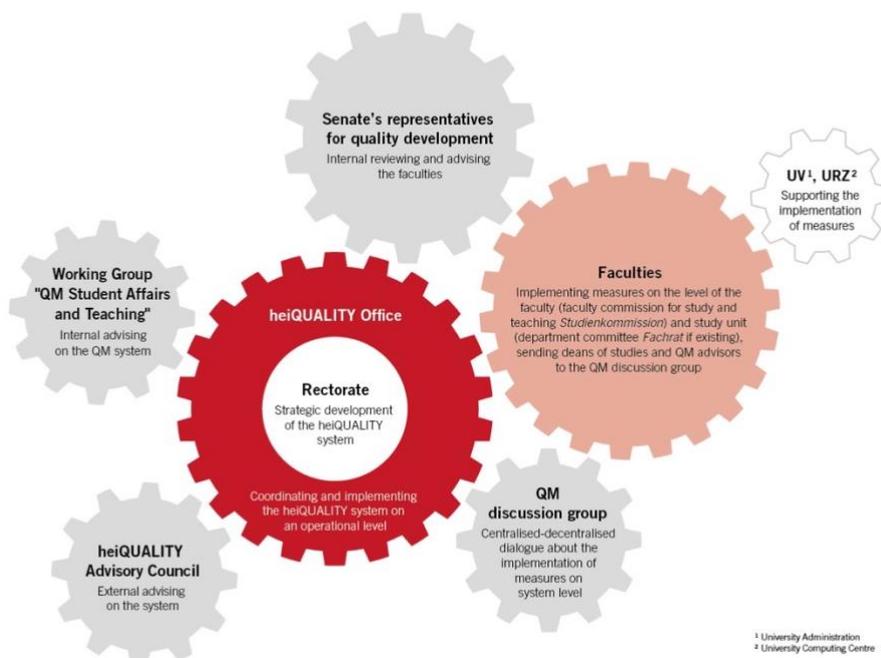
The discontinuation of a degree programme is carried out in the same way as the implementation of a new degree programme, with however significantly shorter phases. The responsible study unit first forwards a detailed justification for the discontinuation by presenting all means and measures taken via the Division of Student Affairs and Teaching to the Rectorate. It is essential that all enrolled students have the possibility to finish their studies despite the discontinuation. In a second step, if the Rectorate also sees no other opportunity, then to close the degree programme, the rules of the discontinuation are prepared by the Legal Service Student Affairs and Teaching.

After that, the decision of discontinuation and its rules have to be adopted by the faculty-internal and the university-internal bodies. Subsequently, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg (MWK) will be asked to approve. On receipt of the MWK's approval, the discontinuation of the degree programme will be published in the bulletin of the Rector of Heidelberg University.

The Division of Student Affairs and Teaching initiates the required measures to be taken within the University, as described in Chapter 3 *Design and implementation of a New Degree Programme*.

## 6. CONTROLLING AND REGULATORY SYSTEM heiQUALITY STUDENT AFFAIRS AND TEACHING

The decision competencies, tasks and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the processes of implementation, offering, evaluation, further developing and discontinuation of degree programmes, as well as the university's own procedure for accreditation and re-accreditation of degree programmes in the frame of heiQUALITY are already described in the respective passages above. The governance structure of heiQUALITY student affairs and teaching is closer described hereinafter. The most important stakeholders involved in the design, further development, and implementation of the heiQUALITY system student affairs and teaching are depicted in the chart. The meshing of the gears symbolises joint meetings and dialogues.



The **heiQUALITY Advisory Board** advises the university on the strategic further development of the system; the Vice-Rector Quality Development is responsible for the **working group QM Student Affairs and Teaching** (with representatives from all status groups: professors, academic staff,

students) which advises on the internal operative implementation of the system. The **senate's representatives for quality development** (SBQE) are university members of all status groups (professors, academic staff, students) and scientific cultures, elected by the Senate, who attend as internal evaluators to the (re-)accreditation of the degree programmes and their quality development. In the QM processes within the **faculties** and in the implementation of measures for further development of quality in student affairs and teaching all status groups are also involved, particularly via the decentralized bodies department committee (Fachrat, if existing) and faculty commission for study and teaching (Studienkommission). The **QM discussion group student affairs and teaching** consists of all faculty deans of studies and their faculty QM advisors (decentralized level) as well as the Vice-Rector Quality Development and the heiQUALITY office (central level). This group initiates university-wide measures for quality development concerning heiQUALITY as a system. The **Rectorate** and particularly the Vice-Rectorate Quality Development manage the strategic (further) development of the heiQUALITY system. The Vice-Rectorate Quality Development is the Rectorate's member responsible for the **heiQUALITY office**, which is in turn responsible for the coordination and operative implementation of the heiQUALITY system. Central service facilities like the University Administration and the University Computing Centre support the faculties and study units in the implementation of their planned measures.

## 7. DEALING WITH RESULTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES

### 7.1 DEGREE PROGRAMME

On the level of each degree programme, the internal evaluation procedure for quality development (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) is designed and implemented in a manner that a closed control loop is realised, consisting of the internal accreditation procedure (Q+Ampel-Klausur) and the Monitoring. Monitoring here refers on the one hand to the monitoring of deadlines and requirements, as well as on the other hand to the autonomous implementation of measures by the faculties, supported by the QM Advisors and the heiQUALITY office. Further information can be found in the respective guideline papers.

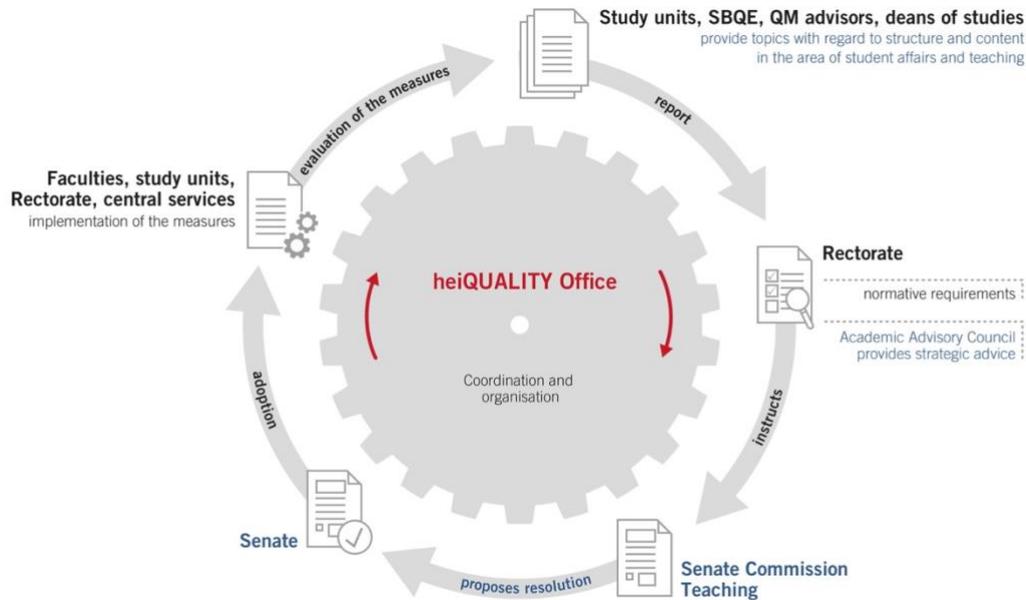
Various service facilities can also play an important role in the implementation of measures. For instance when study units require additional expertise in the implementation of specific measures (e.g., introducing new forms of teaching, learning and assessment, where the heiSKILLS Department for Teaching and Learning provides advice and support).

Another important part of the internal evaluation procedure (Q+Ampel-Verfahren) is the Monitoring in between two internal accreditation procedures (Q+Ampel-Klausuren): After approximately four years, data collection starts again. The new data will be compared with the data from the previous evaluation procedure in order to be able to assess first effects of the implemented measures and, if necessary, make adjustments.

The core of the Q+Ampel-Verfahren is the Q+Ampel-Klausur every eight years: The effects of the implemented measures are evaluated on the basis of fresh data and a comparison of data over time including the data from the Monitoring. Then, at the latest, it becomes visible, whether the measures have taken effect. If they were not (sufficiently) successful, other options have to be considered and decided upon within the frame of re-accreditation/recertification.

## 7.2 UNIVERSITY

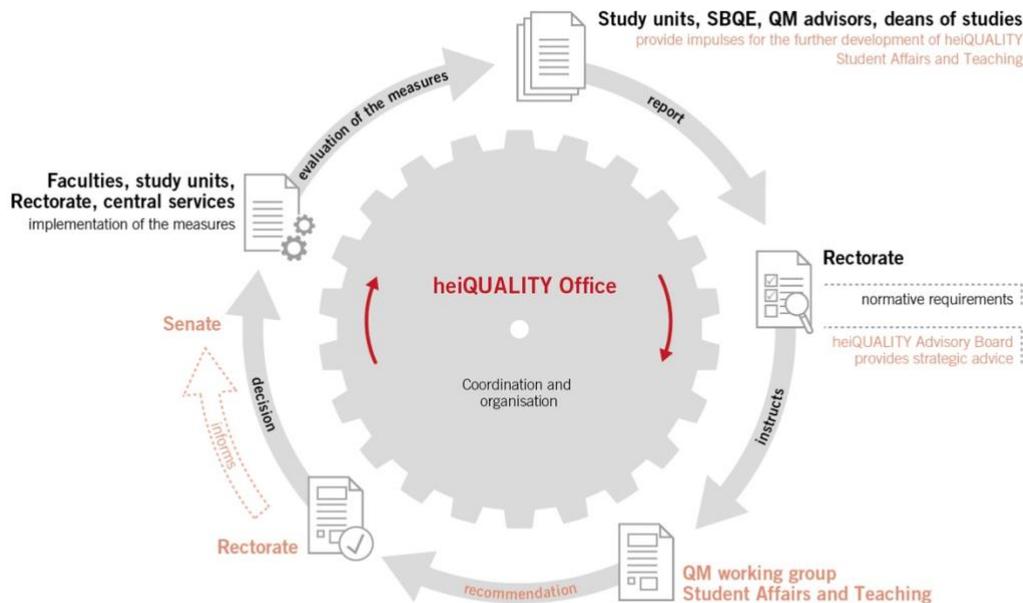
Heidelberg University has its own process for dealing with interdisciplinary topics:



The topics discussed in the meta-evaluation meetings with the senate's representatives for quality development (SBQE) and the study units, as well as in the QM discussion group and in the monthly meetings between the faculty QM advisors and the heiQUALITY office, are the basis of the report given by the heiQUALITY Office to the Rectorate: At least once a year, the heiQUALITY office reports the relevant interdisciplinary points on structure and content in the area student affairs and teaching that have been identified in the above-mentioned exchange, and which are important for the quality development of the University. The Rectorate discusses these points – strategically advised by the Academic Advisory Council – also taking into consideration normative requirements, and, if a need for improvement has been identified, instructs the Senate Commission Teaching (SAL) to draft a resolution on measures to solve the identified problems. Based on the recommendations and the resolution proposed by the SAL, the Senate adopts university-wide measures. The implementation of these measures in the faculties and study units is supported by the central services and the Rectorate. The effect and the success of the measures are evaluated by discussing the topics again in the next meta-evaluation meetings with the SBQE and with the study units, as well as in the QM discussion group and in the monthly meetings between the faculty QM advisors and the heiQUALITY office. Topics identified within this process that involve the central services in the area of student affairs and teaching are also addressed.

## 8. SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF heiQUALITY STUDENT AFFAIRS AND TEACHING

The systematic further development of heiQUALITY Student Affairs and Teaching is also based upon its own process:



The topics discussed in the meta-evaluation meetings with the senate's representatives for quality development (SBQE) and the study units, as well as in the QM discussion group and in the monthly meetings between the faculty QM advisors and the heiQUALITY office, are the basis of the report given by the heiQUALITY Office to the Rectorate: At least once a year the heiQUALITY office reports the relevant interdisciplinary points on structure and content of the QM system heiQUALITY Student Affairs and Teaching that have been identified in the above-mentioned exchange, and which are important for the further development of the system. The Rectorate discusses these points – strategically advised by the heiQUALITY Advisory Board – also taking into consideration normative requirements, and, if a need for improvement has been identified, instructs the QM working group Student Affairs and Teaching to suggest possible improvements of the system and to present them to the Rectorate. The QM working group Student Affairs and Teaching presents its recommendations to the Rectorate, which will either approve them, approve them with adjustments, or return them for revision. After the Rectorate's decision, the Rectorate informs the Senate about the systemic adjustments that will then be implemented. The implementation of the adjustments in the faculties and study units is supported by the central services and the Rectorate. The effect and the success of the adjustments are evaluated by discussing the topics again in the next meta-evaluation meetings with the SBQE and with the study units, as well as in the QM discussion group and in the monthly meetings between the faculty QM advisors and the heiQUALITY office.

